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*See story on page 20*

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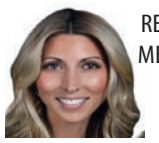
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27 Cricket, Glastonbury
87 West Clark, West Haven
44 Dogwood, Glastonbury
16 Rivendell, Marlborough
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19 Quail Run, Berlin
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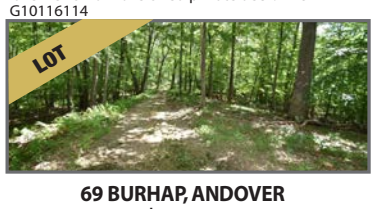


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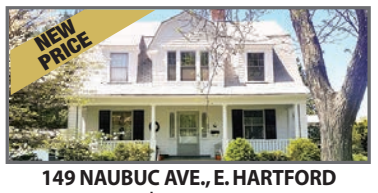


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# glastonbury LIFE

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## QUOTE OF NOTE:

"I think it's their personalities. They're very outgoing, very people-oriented."
*- Trish Manfredi, who rescues Siamese cats.*

**See story page 9**

## ON THE COVER

**Barbara Gordes has been coloring for the past two years.**

**Photo by Brian Ambrose**
See story page 20

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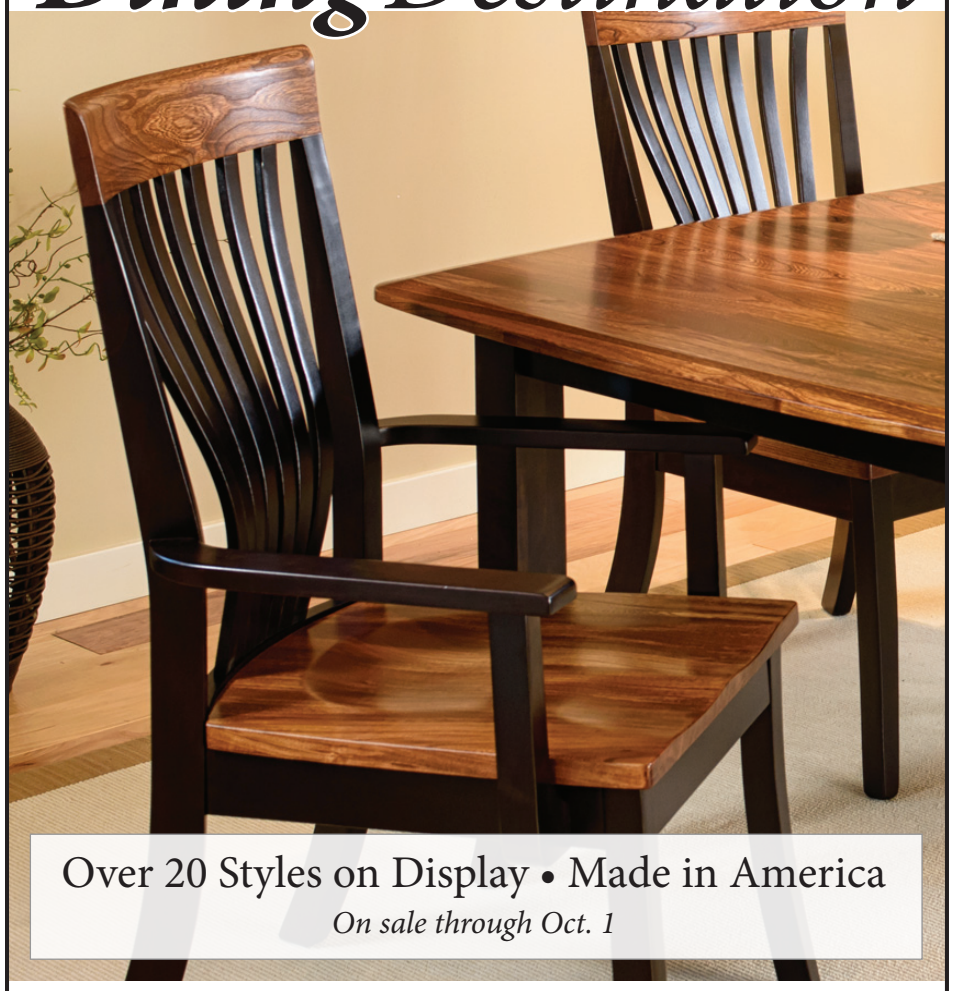

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# Tobacco farming endures through the centuries

## Local crop is used for cigar wrappers

by Nancy Thompson
*Editor*

Broadleaf tobacco is still grown in farms in South Glastonbury. The shed's sides are open so the tobacco inside can dry.

Nancy Thompson photo




New England Warrior was one of many companies to use Glastonbury-grown broadleaf tobacco for its wrappers.

Courtesy photo

Demand is down and only a small number of barns remain, but broadleaf tobacco is still grown in Glastonbury, a tradition that predates the arrival of early European colonists.

Howard Horton and other farmers have detailed the evolution of the town's tobacco industry in documents on file at the Historical Society of Glastonbury. Those histories tell a tale of tremendous success through the early 20th century followed by a steady decline as farmland was developed and the popularity of cigar smoking waned.

Tobacco grown here, mostly in South Glastonbury now, but previously elsewhere, including the property that is now the site of Somerset Square, is a variety known as broadleaf, believed to have been developed in the 1830s. It became important commercially about 10 years later. The crop is grown in sunlight and used most often for binders for cigars, as opposed to shade-grown tobacco, which is more common to the north, in towns along the Connecticut River in Connecticut and southern Massachusetts. Travelers flying into Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks can see white fabric covering many of the fields in the area. Shade-grown tobacco often is used for cigar wrappers.

Tobacco was grown at more than 100 farms, on average about 20 acres each, at the peak of the local tobacco industry. Figures for tobacco production in the state as a whole quadrupled from 1.2 million pounds in 1849 to 6 million in 1859, much of that in local farms. By 1901, state farms produced 19 million pounds of cigar tobacco. In 1925, half of the state's tobacco crop was broadleaf.

The boon was not to last, however.

In 1979, the combined acreage of both kinds of tobacco was nearly 80 less than in 1950, with almost 9,500 acres of broadleaf tobacco harvested in 1950 and only 1,300 acres in 1979. Part of that was a decline in the popularity of cigar smoking, and part was the development of farmland here and elsewhere.

In 1981, the Consolidated Cigar Corp., which opened here in 1920, cut the amount of land it would farm in Connecticut and western Massachusetts to about half. The company pulled out of the state altogether four years later.

Today, a handful of independent farmers, mainly in South Glastonbury, continue to grow broadleaf tobacco and to dry it in picturesque barns scattered throughout the countryside.

Of the 150 or so tobacco barns – also known as sheds – once used for drying the leaves, many have burned down or collapsed in storms or from neglect over the years. One shed, the last used by the Consolidated Cigar Corp. and built around 1870, has found a new life after being rescued by the local historical society.

The shed's owner, Daniel Delmastro, donated the building, the roof of which was partially collapsed, to the society about seven years ago. Money from grants established by the late Natale and Norma Sestero and by Francis J. and Agnes C. Muccio through the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, as well as historic preservation grants and contributions of money and volunteer laborty by local residents and businesses provided the means to dismantle the structure board by board, store it in two tractor-trailers, move it from Oak Street to the grounds of the society's Welles-Shipman-Ward House on Main Street in South Glastonbury, and reassemble it.

There, it has been named the Oak Street Tobacco Shed Education Center turned into a museum of the town's agricultural history. **GL**

*The Oak Street Tobacco Shed Education Center will be open for the historical society's Thanksgiving is Here! program November 13. When summer hours resume at the Welles-Shipman-Ward House next spring, the shed also will be open Tuesday afternoons through the end of August and for the farm festival in September. Details are available at hsgct.org.*

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# Using 'Sandy Toes and Soggy Dollars' to find a cure

## Lisa Blancato raises money for rare cancer

**by Mara Dresner**
*Staff Writer*

Lisa Blancato has turned sadness into action. Her mother, Millie Michalski, lost her battle to a very rare and aggressive cancer called Leiomyosarcoma in June, 2013.

Michalski was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She moved to East Haddam and ommuted to her job at Pratt and Whitney in East Hartford.

"She said, 'You have to move to Glastonbury. What a great town,'" Blancato remembered. "She was born in the 1940s and raised in the 1950s in Brooklyn. She was about appreciating what's around you, living your life fully. She said it like it was, but gently. You always knew how she felt about you."

Her mother eventually sought treatment at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, which extended her life beyond what is typical for patients with that cancer.

"When my mom was approaching the end and had an idea the end was coming, I said I need to do something to honor her memory. She said I should live life in a good, respectable way. I said I needed to do something more. I wanted to raise money for those who helped extend her life for another five years," Blancato said. "She looked at me and I

Courtesy photo

**Bella Blancato, 10, checks out a microscope at a laboratory at Dana Farber. Every year, the family is invited to tour and learn about the latest research for Leiomyosarcoma and other cancers. During this trip, the family studied the translucent zebra fish and its value in learning how tumors grow and respond to treatments.**

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**The second "Upbeat Like Millie" fundraiser, which took place last November, had a Wild West theme. Amanda Kohl (far left) is a singer who secured entertainment for the first two events. She's shown with Lisa Blancato, her husband, Mark, and two of their children, Farrah and Bella. Lisa Blancato praised Kohl as a "terrific partner who helped launch Upbeat Like Millie."**

looked at her, and said, 'Sandy Toes has to be in the name.'"

Out of that conversation, Sandy Toes and Soggy Dollars was born. The name was inspired by family vacations.

"My parents were divorced; it was all amicable. Once a year my mom would save up on her own and make sure we would go on a vacation every year. We would always go to the Caribbean. We were always on the beach. If we had sand on our toes, we knew we would be good," Blancato said.

While in the Caribbean, the family would go on a charter to Jost Van Dyke, a British-owned island.

"What you do is charter a boat to get out to Jost Van Dyke and then you swim off your catamaran or whatever it is that got you there. You have to swim to shore. There's a bar there called the Soggy Dollar Bar. There are hammocks; they serve food. It was a family thing," she said.

Sandy Toes and Soggy Dollars teams up with the special events coordinators at The Jimmy Fund and hosts an "Upbeat Like Millie" fundraiser and awareness event at a different venue each year. This year's event, "Vine A Cure," will be on October 22 at Chamard Vineyard in Clinton. Small Town Roots will provide entertainment and the evening will feature a silent auction, farm-to-table food, autumn beers and wines.

Blancato's team includes her husband Mark, and two sets of twins: Anabella and Sarah, 10 ½, and Soleil and Hudson, 5 ½.

"[Anabella and Sarah] were very close to my mom. Three years later, they talk about every day," Blancato noted.

The first event, two years ago, was a black-and-white gala.

"I wanted to do something on the classier side and plant a little seed among my friends and family," Blancato said.

More than 100 people attended, including her mother's oncologist from Dana Farber. Christ Church in Hartford donated space and an a capella group from the University of Hartford performed.

"Everything fell into place nicely," Blancato said.

Last year's theme was the Wild West.

"Now we're getting people who didn't even know my mom," Blancato said.

She said that the money raised will help in research for the disease.

"Dana Farber bought her five years of quality living," she said. "From the parking attendants to the oncologists to the researchers, it's like no place else. The money needs to go to the researchers because it's such a rare cancer, it


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doesn't get the attention it needs. Dana Farber is saving lives."

Last year's event raised $14,000, a small dip from the first year when they raised $16,000. Blancato's goal is $25,000 this year. She hopes between 150 and 200 will attend.

"The funds she raises go directly to our sarcoma department and specifically help Leiomyosarcoma patients and fund the research to combat this specific cancer," said Molly P. Moss, development officer for special events at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Division of Development and the Jimmy Fund. "Lisa is one of the most optimistic, positive people I have ever come across. Her love for her late mother and passion for fundraising for Leiomyosarcoma research and care comes across each time I have spoken with her. Lisa has brought attention to a very rare and relentless disease and has been a steadfast supporter of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute."

Blancato said she's been amazed by the generosity of people, including those who have helped with events, such as Maneeley's Banquet & Catering in South Windsor and Glastonbury's Sweet Madeline's donuts.

"What's neat is when I go out for the silent auction items. I keep it local. People who didn't even know my mom are stepping forward. It says a lot about the people here," she noted.

She said that she is encouraged by the way the country is coming together for cancer research, whether it's Vice President Joe Biden's projects or the collaborative effort of Stand Up to Cancer.

"It really is about being in this together. Whether you know of someone going through it or not, it will eventually affect all of us. We really need to come together to put an end to cancer," she said.

She calls her gala events "Upbeat Like Millie" to reflect her mother's spirit.

"Three years ago, not that many people knew she had cancer. Now 300 people are aware of the disease and help me conquer this disease in some little way," Blancato said. "Everyone can do something, truly. Everyone can make a difference. I know it might sound corny, but it's true." **GL**

*To learn more, including details about the October 22 event and other ways to help, visit sandytoesandsoggydollars.com.*

Courtesy photo

**Lisa Blancato and her mom, Millie Michalski, took an annual apple picking trip to Rose's Berry Farm in October 2012, the fall before Michalski died. Blancato said she can feel her mother's warmth and love in the photo.**

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Trish Manfredi has fostered dozens of Siamese cats.

Photo by Mara Dresner

# Providing 'food, litter and love'

## Trish Manfredi rescues Siamese cats

**by Mara Dresner**
*Staff Writer*

Growing up, Trish Manfredi always had cats and dogs as pets. Having had a Siamese cat as a young girl, she has long held a special place in her heart for the unique cat.

The Maryland native has had a varied career. She worked at the University of Massachusetts as the assistant director of cooperative extension before taking early retirement, and after several years took a position at the University of Connecticut in the special projects cooperative extension, where she worked with women farmers.

"It was quite a shift," she said of her eight years at UConn. "The broad term was agriculture risk management. We concentrated on the business side of farming."

She also conducted lectures and workshops on floral design.

In the early 2000s, a computer search put the idea of cat rescue in her mind.

"It was when the internet first came a long, way before Google and all of that. I put in 'Siamese cat' one day and up came with

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Siamese rescue. One of the volunteer activities was being a transporter. We started doing transfer, if a cat was getting adopted or needs to go from someone giving up a cat to the volunteer who's fostering. They called it the Meezer Express. That's our word for Siamese cats. It's like the Pony Express," said Manfredi, who volunteers with her husband, Peter. "At that point we had an elderly Siamese who was not all that well. I started the training to become a foster parent but didn't want to stress him by bringing in another cat. When he passed away, I finished up the training."

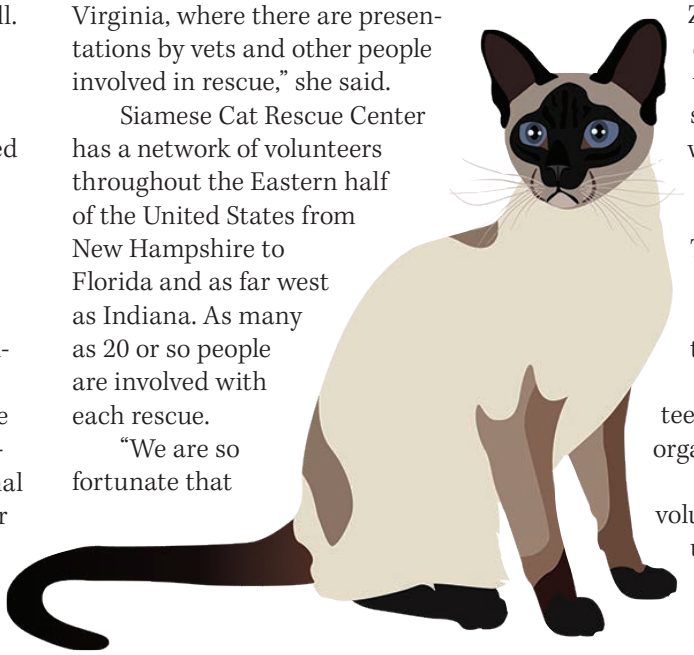
Manfredi works through the Siamese Cat Rescue Center, which was founded in 1998. Siamese Cat Rescue, based in Virginia, covers over 15 states and has an active volunteer group of more than 500 volunteers that includes fosters, intake evaluators, interviewers, transporters, regional coordinators, functional leads and kennel supervisors. Other volunteers help man tables at cat shows, sell the group's annual calendar, post flyers, crochet "snugglies" and make cat toys. Volunteers rescue and adopt out almost 1,000 cats each year.

Manfredi went through extensive training before she was authorized as a volunteer.

"There are videos to study with questions to answer, mentors to guide you, an online resource library and much more, including a long weekend at the SR Center in Virginia, where there are presentations by vets and other people involved in rescue," she said.

Siamese Cat Rescue Center has a network of volunteers throughout the Eastern half of the United States from New Hampshire to Florida and as far west as Indiana. As many as 20 or so people are involved with each rescue.

"We are so fortunate that the majority of our volunteers are long term. We see volunteers adopt from us, then join the ranks as a volunteer, and 10-plus years later, they are still involved with helping us in some format or other. The variety of opportunities, the ability to scale up or down based on what any one individual has time for, and the dedication of individuals such as Trish make us who we are," said Siri Zwemke, the group's executive director. "All volunteers are screened carefully and we provide in-depth training, so any foster parent such as Trish has gone through a lot of training and gathered a lot of expertise along the way."



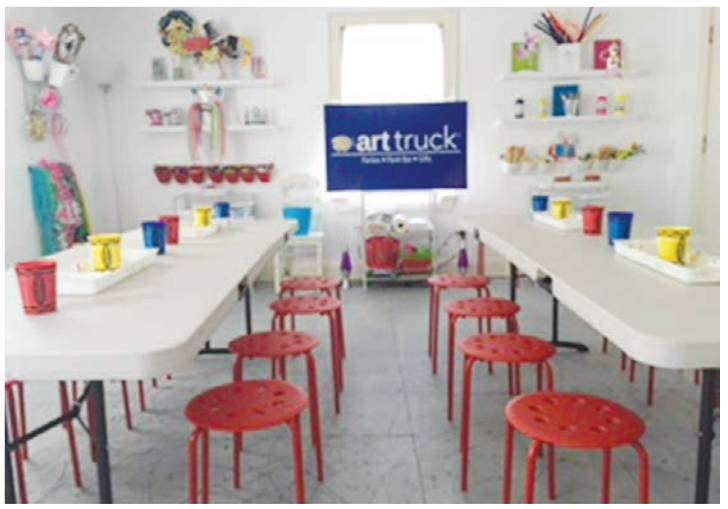
Many of their volunteers have been with the organization for years.

"The majority of our volunteers have been with us for five to 10 years now. This allows us to develop and keep an incredibly strong team, all working hand-in-hand to contribute to the organization's success," she said. "[Trish] has made a significant difference in the lives of the cats both rescued from and placed into the New England states."

Manfredi remembers the cat that launched her career as a foster.

"Our first foster had been hit by a car and someone found him on side of the road. We had to keep him caged because he had a concussion and a fractured pelvis. We named him Simon Latte. He got adopted and went to live in Vermont, so we were off and running," Manfredi said of the March 2004 rescue. "It had snowed so something I was supposed to do that day got canceled. I was sitting by the computer when I got this message. He only had another two days on his ninth life. So my husband came home, I said, 'We're going to Colchester,' and we brought him home."

The Manfredis have rescued 56 cats since 2004. Each rescue stays with them for an average of around 50 days.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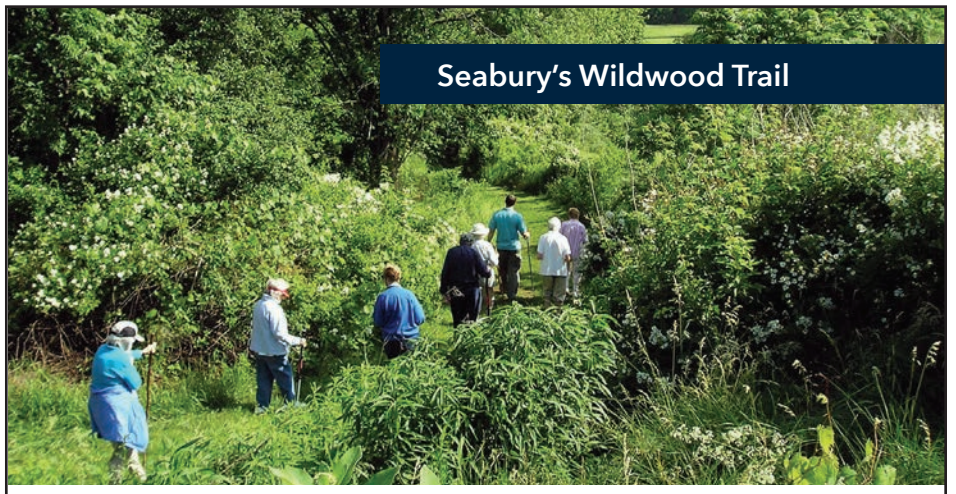


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"I've had them sometimes for just 10 days; I've had them for 180 days," Manfredi noted.

And then there are the cats that never leave the Manfredi household.

"The first one we adopted was Ali. She was from here in Connecticut, in Meriden. She was found as a stray with kittens and she wasn't even nine months old. The people who found her couldn't afford to keep her. They found homes for her kittens," Manfredi said. "This poor little cat was so scared. We'd take her out of the foster room in the morning and take her in our bedroom and love on her. We'd lost one of her personal cats, so we decided to keep her. When anyone was in the house, she would run. Now after six years, she's the most outgoing cat. She comes out and greets people. It's just like watching a child develop."

**"This poor little cat was so scared. We'd take her out of the foster room in the morning and take her in our bedroom and love on her."**

**– Trish Manfredi**

Right now, the Manfredis have four cats, three Siamese and one domestic short hair tortie.

While she's fond of all cats, Manfredi has a special place in her heart for Siamese.

"I think it's their personalities. They're very outgoing, very people oriented. They have many dog-like behaviors. Ours play fetch. They follow you around, they want to be with you all the time," she said. "When they end up in shelters, they often don't do very well. They're very people oriented and don't get as much attention and they're less likely to be adopted."

Siamese Cat Rescue has an online management system which tracks everything from the cat's behavior to medical notes. Volunteers and potential owners are thoroughly screened.

"One of the things that distinguishes our organization from other rescues is we have an online application and a modest fee. We have a telephone interview. We ask for two non-family references and a vet reference," she said.

Not every cat is a stray or in a situation of neglect. People lose their jobs or move and are unable to keep their pets. One family had a baby who turned out to be allergic to the cats.

One consideration when adopting is whether the cat will be kept indoors.

"We don't allow those people to adopt those cats who let them be outdoor cats. We do find many of our cats on the street, and they don't need to be put back in danger again," Manfredi said.

Potential foster homes need to have a separate room for the cat to be in in order to acclimate to the new household.

"If we deem their personality is fit, the cat is able to come out and socialize in the house and be treated as family member," said Manfredi who also is now an official evaluator.

She said that fostering the cats is an important part of ensuring that an adoption will be successful.

"Assessing the cat's personality and figuring out what will make them feel safe and secure and comfortable" is key, she said. "It takes some time. We had one last summer that was doing really well in the foster room. We let him out and for a week or two, he seemed to be fine and then he started attacking our female cats. If we hadn't given that time to assess him, we might have adopted him out with someone who has female cats and that wouldn't have worked out."

She said she often keeps in touch with the families who adopt cats.

"It's quite a network," Manfredi said.

The organization also will take back a cat if it doesn't work out.

"One of great things about VSCR is we stand behind our cats. We take cats back no matter what," Manfredi said.

Of course, the goal is to help the right people adopt the cats. And the volunteers play a major role in ensuring that bond.

Manfredi writes articles about issues such as how talkative Siamese cats are and also created a list of 21 tips for families. She said the organization provides support throughout the year.

"All the fosters are connected online. So if someone has a problem, they will write in, 'My foster cat is doing x,' and they will get 10 or 12 suggestions about what to consider," she said.

There's also a newsletter and the New England volunteers get together several times a year. Their major get together in August attracts 60 to 70 volunteers.

Manfredi and her husband also own Domestic Cow Antiques and Events.

"We specialized in vintage Connecticut milk bottles, other antique bottles, vintage kitchenware and linens. The 'events' portion is floral design presentations and workshops, as well creating centerpieces for events," she said.

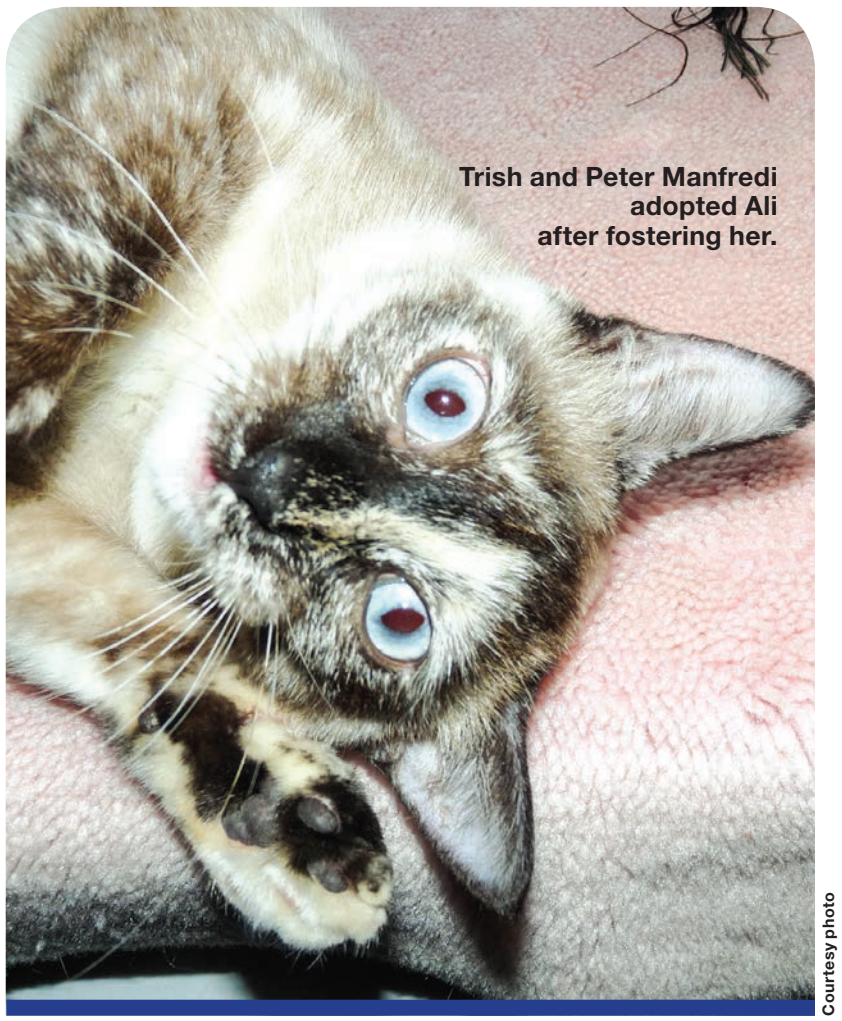
Even with that, she's ferried cats to as far as the Canadian border, logging nearly 4,500 miles as a part of Meezer Express.

"Trish's dedication, like that of all Siamese Rescue volunteers, shows how deeply the admiration runs for this breed of cat. Siamese Rescue is broken down into regions with the Northeast region covering New England. Trish has been instrumental in finding speakers for the annual luncheon of the New England volunteers and it is always a treat to discover who the next speaker will be. You might not be able to have more than one Siamese cat, but you can save many with the help of volunteers like Trish and Peter Manfredi," Mary Pelchat, Northeast regional coordinator, said.

Manfredi has a positive attitude about letting the cats she fosters move on to their adoptive homes.

"I think of them as our students and they graduate and go on to the next part of their lives. I miss them in a way, such as when I go upstairs and there's not a little meow from the foster room. But usually another one appears. And you know they're well loved somewhere else," she said. "We need more foster parents, people that would provide a temporary loving home. You provide food, litter and love." **GL**

*To learn more about fostering and adopting Siamese cats, visit va.siameserescue.org.*



**Trish and Peter Manfredi adopted Ali after fostering her.**

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Courtesy Photo Connecticut Audubon

# An emphasis on learning

## Audubon center's new head is passionate about conservation education

**by Nancy Thompson**
*Editor*

Michelle Eckman discovered the wonders of nature when she was a young child, but it wasn't until several years later, when she was studying to become a pharmacist, that she realized that conservation was her passion.

She had gone to a nature camp when she was about five, learned about endangered whales and their songs during a school assembly with Greenpeace a few years later, and enjoyed hanging out with family friends who always had animals around.

"I don't know if I reflected on those experiences until my sophomore year in college," she said. "I thought about being in that pond with all those critters. I thought about the whales."

The Greenpeace program affected her deeply.

"I'm not really a big fan of assemblies because I don't think they have much impact, but this one did," she said. When she heard the whale's songs, she felt they were more than simply a means of communication. "I interpreted it as screaming out in pain, screaming 'Help me,'" she said. She became determined to help and joined a Greenpeace chapter in high school.

She never lost interest in animals and nature, but she enrolled in the University of Rhode Island's pharmacy program after spending 10 years working summers and part-time at an institutional pharmacy. It didn't take long for her to realize that it wasn't the field for her.

"It wasn't captivating," she said. "It was during that year that I really reflected. I wanted to save the whales."

She considered transferring to the university's marine biology department but ended up transferring to the University of Massachusetts, where she was impressed by what students and faculty were doing. "It was a completely different situation," she said. "It was the best decision I made in terms of my career."

During her junior year she studied the conflict between humans and wildlife and learned about piping plovers, a small sand-colored bird that breeds on Atlantic coastal beaches and is

Photo by Nancy Thompson

**Michelle Eckman, an expert in environmental education, is the interim director at the CT Audubon Society Center on Main Street.**

threatened by coastal development, storms, predators and humans who disrupt their breeding grounds.

"I fell in love with piping plovers," Eckman said. "I wanted to help the species."

She was chosen as an intern with the Student Conservation Association and spent a summer studying piping plovers on Fire Island, off Long Island. "It was the best summer of my life," she said. "I realized that my helping the planet was going to be through birds. It's been my path ever since."

After college she worked for Massachusetts Audubon as an avian field biologist, then at a bird observatory at Point Reyes National Seashore in California. Money became an issue.

"It was California, the 90s, I was getting a stipend," she said. "I had to get a temp job, so I worked for a consulting firm for two years. I went all over the country. The lifestyle was fine, but my soul was not fulfilled."

She sat next to a professional volleyball player on a flight, and when she told him about her passion, he suggested she read "Ishmael," a book about a wise gorilla who can communicate telepathically with humans. "It might change your life," he said.

And it did.

Eckman returned to research, studying swallow-tailed kites in Florida and polar bears in Manitoba before enrolling in graduate school in New Mexico and studying environmental education.

"I wanted to be an environmental education for the National Audubon Society," she said. "There were three positions open then, and I was hired as an environmental educator at the National Audubon Society Center in San Antonio."

She worked there for five years. "It was amazing," she said. "I loved San Antonio. It was a great community to work with, but I wanted to get back to New England."

When she heard that the Connecticut Audubon Society was looking for a director of education four and a half years ago, she applied for the position.

"I said to myself, 'That is my job'." She works at the state organization's headquarters in Fairfield, where she oversees education programs at six nature centers. Since


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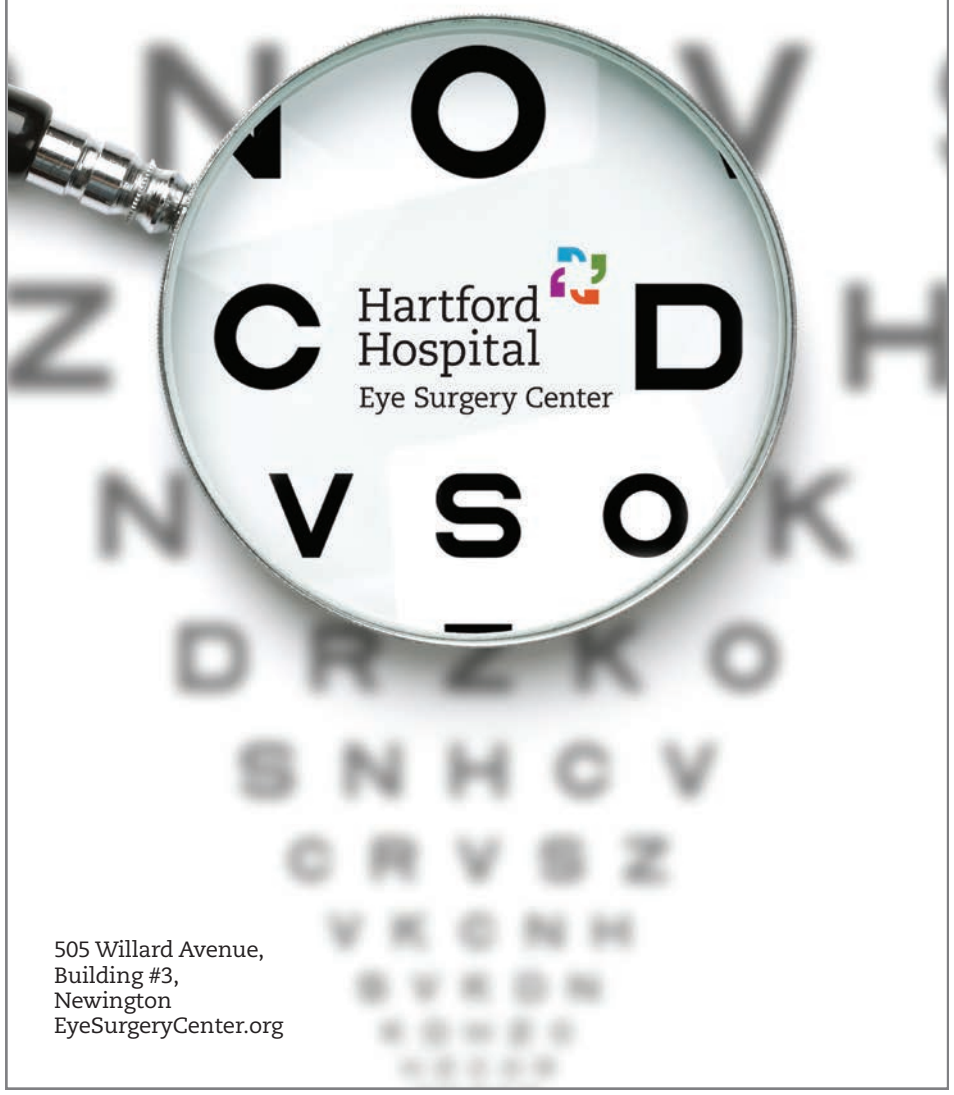


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being appointed interim director at the local center, Eckman has been spending about 80 percent of her time working here, and 20 percent in her role as education director for the state.

"Education is the primary foundation of any center," she said. "It makes sense to have me in this role."

Her first responsibility at the local center is overseeing the completion of a new aviary and interior renovations.

State and local Audubon officials have praised Eckman for her passion and expertise.

"I have worked with Michelle for five years and have found her to be totally passionate and dedicated to raising the bar as to the quality of science based environmental education programs which Connecticut Audubon Society offers to youngsters in grades K through 12 throughout the state, regardless of the school's financial resources," said Nelson North, president of CT Audubon. "In addition, she has created professional development programing which allows teachers to become proficient and comfortable with the new state programs. We as an organization, and in fact, Connecticut as a state, are very fortunate to have Michelle on our team."

**"I realized that my helping the planet was going to be through birds. It's been my path ever since."**

**– Michelle Eckman**

Ralph Wood, a Glastonbury resident who has served as president of CT Audubon and the regional board, has known Eckman since she applied for the statewide position.

"Quite simply, she overwhelmed us with her innovative programming ideas and materials for environmental education, and she outshone the second candidate who was also interviewing that day," he said. "Subsequently, Michelle crystalized her ideas into a new CAS curriculum called "Science in Nature" and then worked tirelessly to obtain funding to launch a pilot with the Bridgeport schools. Trading on the success of the pilot, Michelle spread Science in Nature to the other CAS nature centers, including the Glastonbury Center, while pursuing their local school systems for the money needed to conduct the program. Her efforts paid off handsomely, and the revenue for CAS's environmental education programs started to climb. We were all extremely proud when, in 2015, Science in Nature was chosen as the region's best environmental education program by the New England Environmental Education Alliance."

He continued, "Michelle is very self-assured and uses her expertise in environmental education to advantage when innovating new ideas and marketing CAS's environmental education programs. She is a sought-after expert in the Next Generation Science Standards and represents CAS well at professional organizations of educators. Plus, she is fun to work with, and her enthusiasm and dedication are contagious."

Eckman's long-term vision is to increase membership and participation at the center.

"I really want this to be the hub for learning about how to be stewards of our Connecticut habitats," she said. "I want to provide opportunities for citizen science. Conservation is about action and behavior, and I want to provide the resources and tools for people to take that action."

The challenge, she said, is bringing about that behavioral change. "It's easy to provide information, but it's the actions you take. Humans are motivated by their values, not by ideas. It's harder work, but the rewards are tremendous and lasting. **GL**


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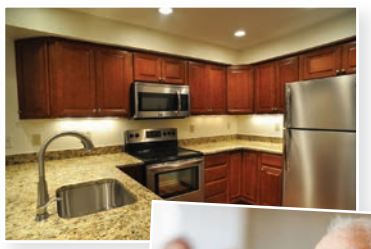

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# Stitching up success

## Gail Yellen is known across the country – and beyond – for her sewing techniques

**by Mara Dresner**
*Staff Writer*

Photo by Mara Dresner

**Gail Yellen gives classes and lectures across the country. She is wearing a shirt that she designed.**

Gail Yellen started sewing when she took classes in the seventh and eighth grades.

"I didn't like it then," she said. "It took so long to make an apron. it just took forever."

She continued to sew in high school. As one of six children, it was a practical skill.

"I never thought of it as a creative outlet. It was I needed A-line skirt, so I'd make an A-line skirt. My mother taught me to do a zipper and a dart, but technically I didn't know anything about it."

By then, she enjoyed sewing, and her grandmothers were also talented with needlework. She remembers a dress her maternal grandmother made her for the first day of kindergarten, a blue dress with a white collar and a wide sash for a bow in the back, which was the last thing she sewed.

Yellen went on to become a dental hygienist.

"I worked at a practice in New Britain from the time I graduated until I stopped. I have good fine motor skills. I always say my athleticism ends right here," she said laughing, as she pointed to her forearms.

In the late 1990s, she took her first class at the Manchester Sewing Machine Center.

"I learned more in six hours than I knew in all the years before. The biggest thing I learned was I don't know how to sew," she said. "That really was what jumpstarted me. I was still at the point where I used a needle until it bent or broke in my machine. That really opened my eyes. I had just bought a new sewing machine and I started taking one class after another. I just loved it. I was like a sponge. I realized sewing was not just utilitarian. It's like painting or sculpting."

After she retired, she began taking even more classes. She was there so often that the store manager offered her a job working in shipping and receiving for 15 to 20 hours a week.

"The owner gave a generous discount to the employees," she said.

Thinking about the amount of money she spent at the store, she decided it would be worth her while.

Yellen's sewing career began to evolve. She moved into sales and about 15 years ago and started teaching classes. One of the items she taught people to make was a skirt.

"I had a skirt pattern I liked but there were certain things I didn't like, so I would just change the pattern myself. Then, someone helped me draft a pattern. I used to teach a class with it called Gail's favorite skirt, the Stockbridge skirt," she said.

She began to learn the industry.

"It opened a whole world to me. I had no idea there was a whole sewing industry and shows. September is National Sewing Month. We used to do a fashion show at the store on a Saturday just to celebrate it. It was just a celebration of your creativity, which was a wonderful way to do that," she said. "It was really working over there and seeing what people did that opened my eyes to it being a whole artistic, creative thing. I am always blown away by how much unbelievable talent there is around the country and around the world. I'm speechless sometimes when I see the things people create and they're doing it just for their own pleasure, strictly as an artistic endeavor."

The now-closed store would draw sewers from all over New England and New York and would bring in "Sewlebrities" to give classes.

"It was really a wonderful community of sewers," Yellen said, adding that the word "sewist" is starting to come into vogue.

She started teaching at regional shows.

"They are basically like big sewing trade shows. They have vendors with booths and lots of classes," Yellen, whose business is called Gail Patrice Design, said.

Some of the shows were offered in multiple cities and Yellen began to get a reputation for her classes.

"My specialty is teaching serger classes. I love the serger. It does trims and overlocks the edges and will also do a cover hem and chain stitch," she said.

She self-published a book called, "It's All About Embellishment!"

She likes to repurpose material, such as a jacket she made from sweaters from her mother with buttons she bought from an auction the Historical Society of Glastonbury.

"Right after I finished it, the American Sewing Guild announced a remake, reuse, restyle contest. I

Courtesy photo

**Gail Yellen's new book came out at the end of last year.**

Photo by Mara Dresner

**Gail Yellen designed this jacket using sweaters from her late mother.**

Courtesy photo

**Gail Yellen demonstrates a technique at one of the many workshops she gives.**

read through all the criteria and I thought this was perfect," she said. "The jacket fit all the criteria for contest. It won! So that was really kind of fun. It was kind of a serendipitous thing."

It's not the only time that fate has had a hand.

She woke up one day and wanted to participate in a show in Cleveland. While it was too late for the regular slate of classes, she was brought in for a lecture and demonstration and to have a booth. She had some materials, mostly from the Salvation Army.

Since she wasn't that well-known at the time, business at her booth was very slow until her piece was featured in the style show.

"Unbeknownst to me, [I'd used] Ohio State's colors. After the style show, it was like the floodgates opened. I sold so many of the patterns, it was crazy. It was just pure luck that they were Ohio State's colors," she said.

Now, she does sewing shows and dealer events around the country, from California to Florida and in between.

"It's really kind of fun and it's very creative. You have instantaneous friends because everybody there likes to sew. You have something in common with anybody there even if you have never laid eyes on them before," she said.

She also has a popular video on Craftsy, an online service which has videos on all sorts of creative arts, including cooking, knitting, woodworking, jewelry making and gardening.

She was part of a three-day shoot in Denver, where the company is located. The video, which was done three years ago, has opened her up to a much wider audience.

"I know it's one of their highest-grossing classes. It goes worldwide. It's really kind of a fun thing for me. I've heard from people from Iceland, from Ireland, from Spain, from South America, from Africa, from all over the United States. It's been a fun network of connecting with sewing people all over the world," she said.

She also has a new book, "Serger Essential: Master the Basics and Beyond!," which came out this past December and was published by Fons & Porter, one of the largest international publisher of sewing and craft books.

She was contacted by the acquisitions editor for the project and flew out to Cincinnati at the end of last year for a weeklong photo shoot for the book.

"One of my big things in my hands-on workshops is I talk about operator handling technique and how important that is. That's something that doesn't get addressed very frequently in classes or books. Sometimes when people's projects don't turn out well, they don't think about what their hands were doing when they were working. Even experienced sewers sometimes get nervous with sergers," said Yellen, who's also written articles for Threads magazine.

She makes a good portion of her own clothes.

"I'll look at fashion magazines and style trends and see what's going to be hot this year for colors. I'll see what different trends are and what they're showing just to get ideas. As far as garments go, there's really nothing new under the sun. All pants have two legs. All shirts have two sleeves or are sleeveless. But there are always variations, things you can do to change them up and keep them current. I do a lot of events around country, so I like to make sure I have new things I'm wearing," she said. "I like to dress for comfort but I want to look nice too."

She sells several patterns, which are all things she would wear.

"My taste is really clothing for myself. I like basic simple lines and I like to embellish. If you have kind of blank slate and a simple line pattern, you can basically do whatever you want with it, which I think is kind of fun. I'm not tall and can't carry a lot of frou frou stuff. I'm not a big ruffly type of person. I can't carry it. I ask myself, 'What do I want to wear?' What do I need more of in my wardrobe and what appeals to me. When it comes to individual pattern designers, you can get a very good idea of what their look is by looking at them," she said. "I like nice-looking clothes. They have to be comfortable. They have to transition well."

For example, a pattern might work well in both denim and silk. A recent pattern can be made both as a T-shirt and as a dress.

"I like things I can get a lot of use out of. Because I travel so much, sometimes I have to do events shortly after I land, so I have to have something that looks good after I've been on a plane," she said. "I say the reason we sew is to please your own aesthetic. It's the style the way you want, the fit you like, things that are flattering. This way you can customize it to be exactly the way you want it to be."

Jennifer Stern-Hasemann, who met Yellen while they were both

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working at Manchester Sewing, has used her drafting background to assist Yellen with the patterns.

"She is extremely detail-oriented and really tries to create designs and techniques that are both beautiful to do but very easy for the students," she said. "Her whole concept is she creates patterns she can embellish. She has a very good eye able to embellish something where it's not loud, but very wearable and very pretty. I think Gail has the eye to able to embellish things but it enhances the design of the garment without looking like an advertisement for embellishing techniques. They're very attractive and they make the garment more beautiful without going over the top where it looks like Elvis."

Yellen enjoys inspiring people with her classes and lectures.

"I love what I'm doing. I love teaching. I always feel it's a triumph when people understand how the machine works and they lose their fear of it. Sergers are fun machines to use but people are very afraid of them. I'm very, very happy at the end of a class when people say, 'Now I get it. I'm going to go home and use my machine,'" she said. "It blows me away to know how creative people are. There's never a time I go around the country when I don't pick up a tip or trick. It makes me very happy to work with people and teach them and get them excited."

Courtesy photo

**Gail Yellen called this flag "Red, White, Blue and (Green)." It was created from leftover fabric, which is the "green" part of it. Most of the fabrics are cotton, with a few pieces of linen. The blue canton is denim and the stars were stenciled on using fabric paint, with a hand-stitched button on top of each star. Directions for the flag are available on her website.**

Just don't ask her to hem a pair of pants.

"When people hear I sew, they'll ask, 'Do you do alterations?' I hate alterations!" **GL**

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# Coloring: It's not just for kids

## Activity touted as a stress reliever

**by Nancy Thompson**
*Editor*

We can all remember coloring as children, the books with our favorite characters and the super-jumbo-size boxes of Crayola crayons with the built-in sharpeners. Grown-ups could color, but pretty much only when they were doing it with us, showing us how to stay inside the lines.

These days adult coloring is an international trend that experts say helps relieve stress. When done as part of a group, it's also a social activity that often provides people with a reason to go out and mix with others. It's so popular here that both the town's senior services department and the Welles-Turner Memorial Library sponsor regular sessions.

"Many people view adult coloring simply as a fun way to express their creative side, but it is more than that," said Crystal Benoit, a

Photos by Nancy Thompson

**Mary Meli and Barbara Gordes chat while coloring at the Riverfront Community Center.**

Jeffrey Bodeau 860.463.9296
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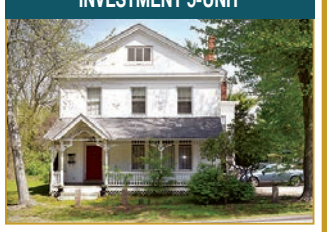
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licensed professional counselor and owner of True Chance Counseling in Glen Lochen. "At a time in our lives where we have to move at a blistering pace to keep up with all of our obligations – work, errands, continuing education, family, friends – it is good to have a tool to help us slow down and that is precisely what adult coloring can do for us. It helps turn our brain off from all of the constant worry about the stress life brings and instead focuses us on the one simple task of coloring. Just as when I run through the woods, there is no room in my mind for thinking about anything but making sure I don't stumble over a root or a rock, when I color I zone in on making sure I stay within the lines and choose the best color to use next. These decisions are relaxing and enjoyable, without the stress that comes with adult decisions like whether to give into a food temptation or how to handle that rude, dismissive coworker tomorrow."

People who turn out regularly for the town's programs agree, although stress relief isn't the only reason they enjoy the activity.

Nicole Cignoli, reference library at the Welles-Turner Memorial Library, called the monthly adult-only sessions "our little club."

Some of the participants bring their own books and pencils, while others color intricate patterns Cignoli downloads from copyright-free websites. She said she heard about the program from other librarians earlier this year.

Henry Timmerman brings his own book and pencils. "I come to the library all the time," he said, adding that he enjoys doing the artwork.

"I like the relaxing, the music, the coloring," said Sally Moore, another regular at the library's sessions. "It's kind of a zen place. This is my personal time. I center myself and get lost."

Margaret Sirota started coloring while visiting her mother. "I got special books with flowers and we would color together," she said. "I found it very relaxing." She said she also enjoys meeting new people and listening to the calming music Cignoli plays during the sessions.

Shirley and Buz Stuckley recently took part in one of the library sessions for the first time. "We're newbies," Shirley said. "I didn't tell my husband what I was bringing him to." The Stuckleys, both retired teachers, live in East Hartford but are regulars at many of the local library's programs.

Kim Harrington said she's been coloring since the library's program started several months ago. "It looked like something fun to do," she said. "I used to get design coloring books when I was young. I have coloring books at home and do it there. If you're stressed out it helps de-stress. It's relaxing. You just focus on what you're doing."

Gabrielle Bashaw was there with her grandmother, June Wagner. "I thought it


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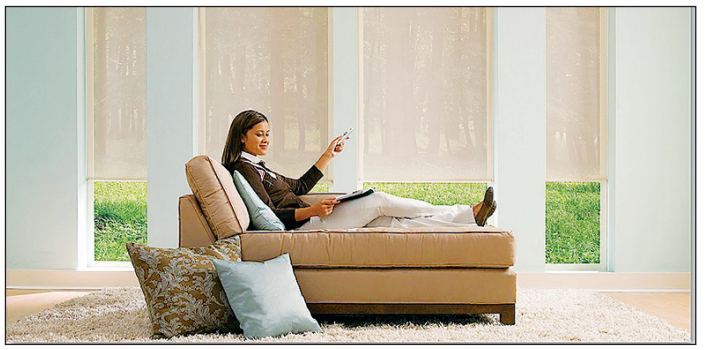

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**Charlotte Klewicki enjoys the relaxation she finds through coloring.**

would be fun and relaxing," she said. "I like drawing and relaxing."

For Fran Dussault, another retired teacher, the sessions are an opportunity to meet people and be artistic. "I don't have real talent," she said. "I can't go out and paint. If you can't create, color what someone else did."

Mary Meli is a regular at the Riverfront Community Center sessions. "I have the schedule and was looking for something," she said. "The people are nice."

A few women from Rocky Hill are part of the group, which is open to out-of-town residents. Gina Barry likes to get together with friends and "just unwind." Natalie Longo likes "hanging out together" and showing each other pictures after they're done, and Sue Cormier finds coloring relaxing and similar to meditation. "It's fun to be around everybody," she said.

Charlotte Klewicki heard about the group from her sister-in-law. "I started coming and I just love it," she said. "It's just relaxing, and I enjoy art." She also has found coloring good therapy for her wrist, which she broke a few months ago.

Barbara Gordes said she enjoys the relaxation and looks forward to seeing everyone at the weekly sessions. "The coloring is so relaxing," she said. "It forces you to sit and relax."

Research by a variety of experts in the U.S. and other countries shows that adult coloring helps people focus and deal with problems such as anxiety, dementia, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, even lowering heart rates in some. The popularity of adult coloring is fairly new, but the technique itself has been around for many years. Carl Jung, a psychologist in the early 20th century, was one of the first to use coloring as a way to help his clients relax.

Benoit summed it up this way: "Coloring intricate designs gives us a way of focusing on something else and being more mindful, so as a mental health professional, I recommend putting down the stress and picking up the colored pencil." GL

# October calendar

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| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

**1** **Tag sale,** 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., tobacco shed at the Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St. No charge. 860-633-6890 or hsgct.org.

**Irish film festival** featuring Song of the Seas, 10 a.m., The Secret of Kells, 1 p.m., Michael Collins, 4 p.m. and The Wind that Shakes the Barley, 7:30 p.m., Irish American Home Society. $8 for adults and $5 for children for the morning films, $10 admission for the 4 and 7:30 p.m. films. Irishamericanhome.com.

**Sound of New England Chorus** in concert, 7 p.m., Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St. Doors open at 6:15. Hors d'oeuvres, desserts and raffle prizes will be available. $25. Tables of 10 can be reserved with advance ticket orders. 877-LUVE-2-SING, ext. 9, or sonecabaret@gmail.com. For details, visit soundofnewengland.org.

**2** **Tag sale**, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., tobacco shed at the Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St. No charge. 860-633-6890 or hsgct.org.

**Homegrown Terror: Benedict Arnold and the Burning of New London**, 2 p.m., Welles Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Seating is limited, so registration is requested by calling 860-652-7720 or online at wtmlib.com

**Pumpkin contest weigh-in,** noon to 3 p.m., Melzen's Pet Supply, 100 Oak St.

**4** **Town plan and zoning commission,** 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. glastonbury-ct.gov.

**5** **Adult book discussion** featuring Lucky Us by Amy Bloom, 7 p.m., Welles Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. No registration necessary.

**6** **Powerful Voices: Connecticut Women Changing History,** 6:30 p.m., Welles Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Seating is limited, so registration is required by calling 860-652-7720 or online at wtmlib.com

**7** **Electrify Your Strings** concert with musicians from Gideon Welles School, Smith Middle School and Glastonbury High School with Mark Wood, a founding member of the Tran Siberian Orchestra, 7:30 p.m., high school gym, 330 Hubbard St. Doors open at 7 p.m. $10 for adults, $5 for seniors and students, available at the door or in advance by mail. Contact Denise Branciforte at 860-652-7975 for a mail-in order form.

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**8** **Nature photography class** with Joe Madar, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., CT Audubon Society Center, 1361 Main St. Participants should bring their digital cameras. $10 for members, $15 for non-members. 860-633-8402 or ctaudubon.org.

**Blessing of the animals** and adopt-a-pet weekend, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., St. James Episcopal Church, 2584 Main St. Event will be in the parish hall if weather is inclement. Donations of pet foods and other items are welcome. Also October 9

**Welsh cheese and US wine evening,** 4 to 7 p.m. Entertainment by Kasha Breau, harpist. $20. Reserve tickets by emailing WelshWNE@gmail.com or calling 860-987-7097. Directions will be forwarded at that time.

**13** **Learn to use Freegal,** a free music service offered by Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 3 p.m. at the library, 2407 Main St. Seating is limited, so registration is required by calling 860-652-7720 or online at wtmlib.com.

**14** **42nd Annual Apple Harvest Festival,** 6 to 10 p.m., Riverfront Community Center lawn. $3, no charge for children three feet tall and under. Free parking and shuttle bus service from Glastonbury High School. Service animals only allowed on festival grounds. crvchamber.org. Also October 15, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and October 16, noon to 5 p.m.

**15** **First in three-part series on Adobe Lightroom,** 1 to 4 p.m., CT Audubon Society Center, 1361 Main St. Participants should bring their computers with Lightroom installed. $10 for members, $15 for non-members. 860-633-8402 or ctaudubon.org. Also October 22 and 29.

**16** **Dinner in Jerusha's Kitchen,** 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St. $55. Seating is limited, reservations required. 860-633-6890.

**Apple Harvest Festival Angry Orchard 5K** and kids' fun run, registration and bib pickup 8:30 a.m., 5K run/walk 9:30 a.m., kids fun run 10 a.m. Riverfront Park, 200 Welles St. $30 for 5K run/walk, no charge for kids fun run. crvchamber.org.

**17** **Board of education,** 7:30 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7961 or glastonburyus.org.

**18** **Town plan and zoning commission,** 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. glastonbury-ct.gov.

**Lyra, the Russian Vocal Ensemble of St. Petersburg,** in concert, 7 p.m., St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 915 Main St., South Glastonbury. Adults $15, students and seniors $10 plus a donation for the local food bank. 860-633-5057 or pattisivocole@gmail.com.

**Streaming vs. cable,** 3 p.m., Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St. Sponsored by the Welles-Turner Memorial Library. Seating is limited, so registration is required by calling 860-652-7720 or online at wtmlib.com.

**19** **Decorated Halloween pumpkin contest** for children 4 to 14, 6:30 p.m., Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St. No charge, but pre-registration required. 860-652-7679 or recreation@glastonbury-ct.gov.

**20** **"Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things: How Glastonbury Residents Have Reached Across Racial, Ethnic, Religious, Economic and Gender Boundaries and Made a Difference,"** presented by the Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative, 6:30 p.m., Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St.

**21** **Family-friendly haunted house,** 6 to 8:30 p.m., Smith Middle School, 216 Addison Rd. $2. 860-652-7679 or recreation@glastonbury-ct.gov.

**22** **Genealogy group** sponsored by the Welsh Society of Western New England, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Participants are asked to bring their Welsh family tree and a lunch dish to share. Reserve a spot by emailing WelshWNE@gmail.com. Directions will be forwarded at that time.

**Used book and holiday decorations sale,** 9 a.m. to noon, East Glastonbury Public Library, 1389 Neipsic Rd. 860-633-5637.

**23** **More Connecticut Lore: Guidebook to 82 Strange Locations"** with author Zachary Lamothe, 2 p.m., Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 3 p.m. at the library, 2407 Main St. Seating is limited, so registration is required by calling 860-652-7720 or online at wtmlib.com.

Used book and holiday decorations sale, 2 to 4 p.m., East Glastonbury Public Library, 1389 Neipsic Rd. 860-633-5637.

**24** **Board of education,** 7:30 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7961 or glastonburyus.org.

**25** **Town council,** 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7710 or glastonbury-ct.gov.

**Coloring club,** 6:30 p.m., Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Seating is limited, so registration is required by calling 860-652-7720 or online at wtmlib.com.

**29** **Hazardous waste collection,** 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., 321 Olcott St., Manchester.

**Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde** starring John Barrymore and with a live performance by Jeff Howey on organ, 7 p.m., St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 915 Main St., South Glastonbury. Tickets available at the door for $10 for adults and $7 for students and seniors plus a non-perishable donation for the town food bank. 860-633-5057 or pattisivocole@gmail.com**.** **GL**

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## Just *for Women*

# Focus on fitness

## Expert advice for women of all ages

**by Lynn Woike**
*LIFE Staff*

Exercise is an important part of any person's regular routine.

Swimming, biking, hiking, yoga: everyone has a personal preference of how they like to stay in shape.

When planning an exercise regimen, in addition to choosing something that will keep one motivated, it's important to consider the physiological needs of the body as it ages.

"For women in their 20s, a lifestyle that includes regular exercise and daily activity is vital," said Jennifer Braun, a certified physical therapist at Anytime Fitness in West Hartford.

"Exercise regimens should include a combination of strength, cardiovascular and metabolic accelerated resistance training for a well-rounded program. Strength is especially important for maintaining strong and healthy bones and setting the body up for prevention of osteoporosis as women age.

"Women have a higher risk of developing osteoporosis – the breakdown of bone to become fragile due to loss of bone tissue. When strength training is started in their 20s and maintained, women are less likely to develop osteoporosis early on and can maintain a more active lifestyle," Braun said.

As years pass and life gets more complicated, it can be difficult to stay on track. Exercise may become less of a priority, but women are encouraged to fight that trend.

"Most fitness trainers say that a comprehensive wellness program includes cardio two to three days per week, strength training a minimum of two days per week and stretching seven days per week. But 30-somethings are busy with careers, families, and homes, so their time is precious, to say the least," said Maggie Durbas, who has a personal training background and owns Journey of Yoga LLC in Simsbury.


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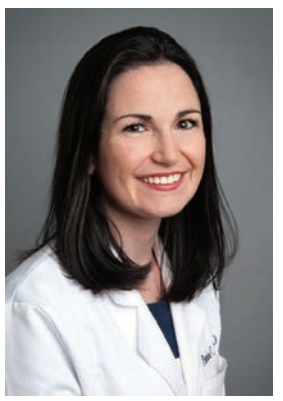
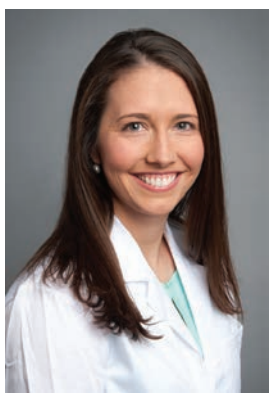


Dr. Patricia Davis

Dr. Davis graduated from Cornell University and received her medical degree from UCONN School of Medicine in 2012. She completed her residency training in ObGyn at UCONN in 2016. Dr. Davis has received awards for excellence in teaching and pelvic surgery.



Dr. Briana Huguenel

Dr. Huguenel is a graduate of Wheaton College and attended the UCONN School of medicine. She completed her ObGyn residency at UMass Memorial Medical Center, where she earned numerous awards for dedication to medical education.

## Just *for Women*

She recommends yoga for busy women in their 30s.

"If time is an issue, practicing yoga for an hour two to three times a week can do triple duty and help with strengthening, stretching and even cardio, never mind the myriad of other health benefits," she said.

"Yoga is far more than simply stretching. Depending on the type of class, it can definitely be considered strength training."

"For example, power and vinyasa both can be strengthening, if the poses are challenging and held for at least 30 seconds. If the vinyasa class is flowing the entire time, like Ashtanga – from which vinyasa was derived – it can also be a cardiovascular workout."

Durbas tells the story of a woman who, because of an injury, used only yoga to train for "her umpteenth triathlon."

"Because of the vinyasa flowing movement, she got the cardio she needed for running and biking, chair and warrior poses prepared her quads for biking and the rhythmic breathing prepared her for swimming. She completed the triathlon close to the same time she had done the prior year," Durbas said.

Your 40s are a time you should be focused on becoming your healthiest, said Kevin Kosis, a certified exercise physiologist with a bachelor's degree in exercise science at Designed Training in Glastonbury.

"Your 40s arewhen your body starts to go through changes. For women especially, premenopausal levels start to change, calcium levels and bone density start to drop off. Osteoporosis rates nearly double after 40, breast cancer rates exponentially rise after 40, and cardiovascular risk factors elevate after 45. But there's an easy fix for that: exercise," he said.

He recommends starting with squats three times a week, using light weights and doing three sets of 15 repetitions each.

"Slowly start increasing weight when you're comfortable and decrease to 10 repetitions," Kosis said.

Studies regarding preventative care in breast cancer show physically active people are less likely to receive a diagnosis and High Intensity Interval Training has proven to be beneficial.

Decreasing stress levels will also do wonders, and again exercise helps with that, he said, adding that a healthy diet is also important to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

As women age into and beyond menopausal years, exercise continues to be a key to staying healthy as well as warding off other illnesses and staying mentally sharp.

According to Peter Asadourian of Future Fitness Sport Specific Training, no matter what age you are, "the hardest thing to do is to start a training program."

Different anxieties may come into play, but it's important to approach the task at hand with the right mindset.

Those in older age groups should not fall victim to the belief that it is too late for them to start a new, healthy routine.

"When starting that training program, you need to take some gradual steps," he said. "Set goals for yourself, where you want to be in a few months, etc."

"Find out what you can do and know your limits. If you are able to do movements with great form and you are breathing comfortably and there is no pain, then you can do it. Just because you are 50 or 60-plus years old does not mean you can't do what a 20-year-old is doing."

It's important when joining a gym to be sure a trainer is providing appropriate guidance and movements are being modified to one's personal abilities, Asadourian said.

"Taking part in a fitness program, especially as we get into our 50s and 60s is very beneficial," he said. "We want our bones and muscles to stay strong to avoid injury and other health issues. Exercise is the answer to a lot of everyday health issues."

Its easy to start; your first move is to get up off the chair." **GL**

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Just for Women

# Why I wear PINK

## Breast cancer color is personal for many

**Compiled by Mara Dresner & Alicia Smith**

It's hard to miss the pink during Breast Cancer Awareness month in October. Many people go pink just to show support or raise awareness for a good cause. But for others, wearing pink has a much more personal meaning. We spoke to readers to find out why they wear pink.

**Sandy with her children and husband**

### Sandy Cassanelli

"Most people wear pink for breast cancer awareness, but I believe there is not enough awareness to metastatic breast cancer. My life has changed dramatically since being told that my breast cancer had spread to my liver in April 2015, at age 39, and that I would be living with Stage IV metastatic breast cancer and in treatment with no cure for the rest of my life! Most people don't even know what metastatic breast cancer is:

One out of four people initially diagnosed with early stage breast cancer will develop metastatic breast cancer. Metastatic breast cancer accounts for approximately 40,000 deaths in the United States annually. One hundred and ten women die daily from metastatic breast cancer. Metastatic breast cancer is greatly underfunded! Currently, only 7 percent of breast cancer research funding is allocated to metastatic breast cancer research.

In 2016 my friend Heidi Grise and I decided to create Breast Friends Fund and raise moneys for Dr. Eric Winer and his research team at Dana Farber Cancer Institute. Dr. Winer is also the chief of the Division of Women's Cancers at Dana-Farber and the Thompson Senior Investigator in Breast Cancer Research. He is a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. He is also my oncologist at Dana Farber. One hundred percent of all moneys raised goes directly to metastatic breast cancer research. Visit breastfriendsfund.org."

### Adam Clemens

I lost my mother to breast cancer when I was 7. I started as a participant/volunteer at an American Cancer Society Relay for Life at the age of 18. Within a couple of years I worked my way up to chairing the event. Around 2005 I also began to raise money for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer. At 23, I was recognized as the top individual fundraiser in the state.

That got some attention and I was tapped to become a legislative ambassador for the American Cancer Society's Cancer Action Network. In early 2009, my friend, client, and breast cancer survivor, Rosanne Palazzolo, approached me to see if I wanted to organize a benefit with her. That first event raised a little more than $6,000 which was donated to Hartford Hospital. We incorporated, founding the Linda Clemens Breast Cancer Foundation (lindaclemens-foundation.org), a 501(c)3 non-profit, named after my mother. Rosanne and I got matching tattoos to commemorate the event. Our goal is to provide comfort and support to Connecticut women battling breast cancer. We've also founded the Linda Clemens Early Detection Fund at the Neag Comprehensive Cancer at UConn Health Center to provide free mammograms and biopsies for the un- and under-insured.

Throughout October, we partner with over 60 local businesses and community organizations to raise money and awareness. Each spring we hold the Pink Glove Gala. It is a fantastic evening celebrating life and remembering those who have lost their battles. Nearly all of the funds we raise go back directly to local families who have been affected by breast cancer. We're a group of friends and family who have come together because of something negative and turned it into a positive to help others in the community. **GL**

# What nutrition professionals eat

## Pie and candy have place on the menu

**by Mara Dresner**
*Staff Writer*

Every day there seems to be a new diet book or plan that everyone is talking about. Figuring out what's best to eat can be a challenge. So LIFE went to the source to ask some health professionals what they eat on a typical day. While everyone's nutritional needs are different, you might find inspiration with these real-world sample menus.

**Katryna Minski,** a Registered Dietitian/Certified Diabetes Educator at Hartford Hospital in Glastonbury, said her biggest tip is to eat throughout the day. "Don't skip meals!" she advised. "Eat regularly every three to four hours. Set reminders in your phone so you don't forget."

She also drinks water infused with cucumber and mint throughout the day, usually about 48 ounces.

**Breakfast:** Prosciutto-wrapped mini frittata muffin made with prosciutto, lots of diced veggies (her favorites include kale, tomato and mushrooms) and a sprinkle of cheese. "These egg cups can be made ahead and are a great grab-and-go breakfast for busy weekday mornings. I recommend using the silicone muffin sheets," she said. She also has 12 ounces of Colombian coffee with a splash of whole milk.

**Snack:** Emerald Nuts 100-calorie pack vanilla roasted almonds and half cup of blackberries.

**Lunch:** Arnold whole-wheat Sandwich Thins roll, two slices deli-sliced Boar's Head Cracked Pepper Mill smoked turkey breast, one slice of sharp provolone cheese, a handful of arugula, Hellmann's light mayo, lightly spread. Served with Sabra single serving cup hummus (original flavor) and sliced veggies (baby carrots, sugar snap peas, mini bell peppers, cherry tomatoes) and a 12-ounce can of Polar pomegranate-flavored seltzer.

**Snack:** Small container of Dannon Oikos Triple Zero Salted Caramel Greek Yogurt.

**Dinner:** Four ounces of baked chicken Parmesan with zucchini noodles. She breads the chicken with almond meal and spices. "I love my spiralizer. It makes eating veggies fun," she said. 16 ounces of water.

**Favorite treat:** One package of Dole Dippers dark chocolate covered frozen banana slices (100 calories)

**Linda York,** a Registered Dietician/Certified Diabetes Educator with the UConn Health outpatient department, noted that exercise is crucial to maintaining a healthy weight. "Exercise is medicine," she said, advocating for a half hour of aerobic exercise each day. "If you do anything extra, that's great, but at least half an hour. If you think of it as medicine, it becomes a habit. You will maintain your weight so you can eat something you want."

That includes sweets and other treats. York said she is careful not to keep trigger foods in the house. "I tend not to keep anything in the house that I really like. I tend to go out and get it," she said of her favorite treats. She also drinks a lot of water.


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**Breakfast:** Two slices raisin toast, one teaspoon of Smart Balance margarine. A cup of coffee with skim milk, no sugar. Or a cup of old-fashioned oatmeal with one teaspoon of brown sugar and one-half cup of skim milk and frozen berries or a sliced banana, with coffee. On weekends, she enjoys omelets with two large eggs, vegetables, hot sauce and Cabot light cheese with two slices toast with Smart Balance margarine.

**Lunch:** A "big" salad with two to three cups of vegetables, as well as one-half to one cup of fruit, and protein, such as chicken or tuna. No dressing. She also enjoys "some kind of starch," for example croutons or a small bag of Cape Cod reduced-fat chips.

**Snack:** If she wants something sweet, she'll have a Quaker Oat 90-calorie granola bar with coffee. She tries to stay under 150 calories for the snack.

**Dinner:** York's biggest meal. Most days she'll enjoy four ounces of wine with dinner, which is often a pasta dish with tomato sauce without any meat. She'll do a quick stir fry with eggplant to add to the sauce, which she'll season with fresh basil, garlic powder and Italian seasoning, topped with fresh Parmesan. She admits to liking white pasta and usually chooses linguini. On other days, she'll make a lemon chicken, cooked in a little oil, which she'll have along with a carb, such as pasta, a potato or sweet potato, along with half a plate of cooked vegetables, such as broccoli or asparagus, which might be frozen or fresh. She also enjoys poached salmon.

**Snack:** Around 9 p.m., she'll have a Chobani Greek yogurt, such as black cherry or coconut. She might also have another bag of Cape Cod chips. Once in a while, she'll enjoy a Fudgsicle or small ice cream sandwich. "If I'm still hungry I have a cup of tea," she said.

**Favorite treat:** Pie, such as blueberry pie. "But I wouldn't have the whole thing in the house; I love it so much!" she said. She also enjoys French cheeses. "You just have to have control and make sure you don't have a lot of that stuff in the house."

**Renée J. Bordeaux,** a registered dietitian (RD), Certified dietitian-nutritionist (CD-N) and certified personal trainer (CPT), is owner and president of Bordeaux Nutrition in Newington (bordeaux-nutrition.com). She is a fan of "Paleo Diet" as outlined by Dr. Loren Cordain, Ph.D.

"I have added my own twist, coining the phrase Paleoesque when working with clients who are transitioning stepwise from a typical high-carb American diet to a healthier, paleo-centric lifestyle. 'Paleo' refers to the Paleolithic era approximately 10,000 years ago when humans were still hunter-gatherers, before the age of agriculture and increased grains in our diet. Once humans began to increase grains in our diet, we began to see increased digestive diseases and inflammation which is the very basis of disease," she explained. "My biggest tip for women's nutrition is to go Paleo. A Paleo diet focuses on nutrient-dense, lower-carb foods that are anti-inflammatory. Women are at higher risk for developing inflammatory/autoimmune conditions. Following a Paleo lifestyle will decrease these risks."

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**Breakfast:** Her "Caveman Cereal:" one-half cup of fruit such as applesauce or berries or one medium banana with one-quarter to one-third cup nuts or seeds (any nuts except for peanuts, which she noted are "legumes that are inflammatory and not nuts") for protein and an omega fat source.

On other days, she will have five to six ounces of leftover grass-fed beef, chicken or pork with one to two cups of leftover vegetables, such as spaghetti squash or acorn squash. If she's having a lower-carb veggie, such as spinach, she'll add about a half-cup of fruit.

She also drinks coffee with almond milk.

**Snack:** Two tablespoons of nuts/seeds or one-half cup fruit with one tablespoon of nuts/seeds or half an avocado with grape tomatoes. She drinks water or herbal tea.

**Lunch:** Five to six ounces of leftover grass-fed beef, pork, chicken, fish, tuna fish or seafood with approximately two cups of non-starchy vegetables (spinach, broccoli, cauliflower or greens) with approximately one-half cup starchy veg such as winter squash, beets, carrots or Brussels sprouts. Vegetables are drizzled with one to two tablespoons of olive, coconut or sesame seed oil for flavor.

**Snack:** Two tablespoon nuts/seeds or one-half cup fruit. Occasionally, she will have one square of gluten-free, dairy-free 80 percent cocoa chocolate with one tablespoon almonds. Also, water, decaf coffee with almond milk or herbal tea.

**Dinner:** Very similar to lunch with one glass of wine.

**Favorite treat:** One-half cup of gluten-free, dairy-free coconut or almond based "ice cream" with nuts or two gluten-free, dairy-free cookies, from Pamela's Products or Aleia's. Another favorite treat is gluten-free, dairy-free dark chocolate "bark thins."

**Natalie Kebalo,** MS, RDN (Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist) at Hartford HealthCare, Jefferson House in Newington, advises, "Get back to the basics as much as you can. Cooking at home with fresh ingredients that are not processed will eliminate the extra calories, fat, sugar and additives, such as artificial colors or flavors, that people are much more conscious of today than ever before." She usually drinks at least eight cups of water per day, mostly between meals.

**Breakfast:** Brewed coffee with 2 percent milk, one cup of water, two boiled eggs, wheat toast (Freihofer's 100 percent Whole Wheat Bread), two kiwi fruits.

**Lunch:** Mixed salad greens with leftover grilled steak, tomatoes, half of an avocado and one tablespoon of Italian dressing. One cup of water.

**Snack:** Whole milk Greek Yogurt from Stop & Shop with a teaspoon of honey.

**Dinner:** "Spaghetti" (noodles made from yellow squash using a Veggetti spiralizer) sautéed with olive oil and diced garlic, with homemade tomato sauce and meatballs (made with half turkey and half beef), one tablespoon of grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese from Stew Leonard's, one cup of water. "I love fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season, like the yellow squash, peaches, and tomatoes," she said. "They are much more tasteful and usually cheaper in the supermarket or farmers market."

**Dessert/Snack:** Soft-serve vanilla/chocolate ice cream from the local dairy bar. She gets a kid-sized "since they love to give extra" and a fresh peach. GL


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Bryan Winoski opened Appalachian Tails Pet Company so he could spend more time with Tuckerman.

Photos by Mara Dresner

# For the love of a dog

## Bryan Winoski celebrates 10 years of Appalachian Tails

**by Mara Dresner**
*Staff Writer*

Bryan Winoski had two dreams: to buy a house and to have a dog.

Although he'd thought about owning a business, after graduating from UConn with a degree in business administration he found work in the insurance industry.

"After college I fell into corporate America for nine years. I was a business analyst and worked at just about every insurance company in town. It was a really good job, but it wasn't for me. It was a desk job," said Winoski, who was an avid hiker and climber.

His two dreams came true when he was able to buy his first house. On the day of the closing, he found his dog, which he named Tuckerman or Tuck for short, after Tuckerman Ravine on Mount Washington.

"It seems like a story but it's true," Winoski said. "I always wanted a dog. I really underestimated how much I fell in love with him. It was killing me to leave him and go to work every day. I wanted to be around him all day."

While he tried doggy daycare, the desire to spend more time with Tuck launched him into a new career: owner and founder of Appalachian Tails Pet Company, which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary.

"That was quite literally the catalyst," Winoski said. "I built the business plan for this so I could bring my dog to work every day. I obviously loved him and thought it would be cool to have a store that provided stuff for other people's dogs. It really was that simple. I didn't like my career; it wasn't really me and it was so tough to leave every morning to go to a job I didn't like."

Winoski wanted Appalachian Tails to be the type of place where people felt comfortable bringing their pets.

"Now, it's common," he said. "Back then, it wasn't as prevalent."

He also wanted a store where people could get answers to their questions.

"There are a lot of places to buy dog food. I felt there could be someplace that really was a resource for people. At the end of the day, it's pet products on a shelf. I wanted to help people learn about nutrition and be a resource for people. I wanted to be

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the opposite of big box," he said. "People have peace of mind here."

He said customers are picky when deciding what brands to order.

"We won't sell a lot of things we would sell a ton of [because] the brands are not that great. If we have it in the store, I would give it to Tuck. It's pretty simple, but it's a big deal. We stick to our guns about the quality of stuff."

The store is on Griswold Street in a 120-year old tobacco barn.

"The building is amazing," Winoski said. "I couldn't have come up with a building that looks more like I envisioned. I'm really proud to be here."

Even in its first decade, the store underwent some major changes.

"When we first opened, we were what the industry calls a full-line pet store, although I hate that name. When we first opened, in addition to dog and cat supplies, we sold aquarium fish, reptiles, small animals like hamsters, all the supplies for aquariums," he said.

That changed as Winoski learned more about the industry.

"I quickly learned that unfortunately all the live animal stuff, the industry just treated like inventory. A parakeet or a fish or a hamster, it was just really bad. If you like animals, it would just break your heart. You buy them from a place and they buy them from a place. Once I learned how all works, I was not resting easy. I felt like every time we sold a hamster to a family, we were supporting that," he said. "I'm truly here because I love animals. It didn't feel good to turn a buck [with something] almost like systematic animal abuse. Over time, I got rid of everything but the dog and cat supplies."

For Winoski, it's all about trust and maintaining that trust, even when it doesn't seem to be the best business decision.

The shop was selling about 5,000 pounds each week of a certain dog food.

"We learned the brand was not being honest with us about what was in the food. Overnight, I got rid of it off the shelves. That [brand] basically paid all our bills. We told everyone why. The only reason we got rid of it was we didn't trust what was in it. That's an example of how we really want to do the right thing. We're going to do what we think is best even if it's not beneficial to us," he explained.

Appalachian Tails has been added some services to expand their connections with their customers, such as a do-it-yourself spa.

"We have tubs and provide everything they need. They wash the dogs and then we clean up so you don't have to," Winoski said.

They also offer dog training and puppy playgroups on the weekends so people can bring puppies to socialize.

Winoski said they're looking at other ways for Appalachian Tails to be a partner with their customers, including considering home services, such as doggie daycare and dog walking, as well as pet photography."

The have devoted customers, such as Jim Lyons of Colchester, who has four dogs, a German Shepherd and three labs.

"We were on a certain dog food at one point and we were looking for something different, something better. You can't get the personal service you get at Bryan's shop anywhere else. He trains the staff about dog food and what makes one food better than another food, [based on] the ages, the type of dog activity. That's the main reason I went in there and that's the main reason I keep going there," Lyons said. "His staff is so great. They're so friendly and they're knowledgeable."

Winoski said that he sees pet trends follow some human trends.

"In general what's happened in the pet industry, and this is a great thing, is that dogs and cats are becoming much more of an integral part of the family. Years ago, dogs were tied up on the back porch with a chain or a rope. People think of their pets much more as integral family members. You see a much different product mix on the high end. It basically follows human trends. We humanize our dogs, so when the trend for humans is low-carb/high-protein, the Atkins diet, a few months later, you'll find dog food that's low-carb/high-protein. There are much more high-quality products aimed toward people who value their dog or cat. There's more and more good stuff available," he said. "The nice thing is you really don't have to break the bank. Even when we first opened which is not that long ago in the scheme of things, the difference between, for example, good quality dog food and sub-par food, it was a substantial difference. So when you decided to use good food, you were committing to a big ticket. These days, we do a ton of research to find high-quality food from companies that don't do a lot of advertising that people might never have heard of. With enough competition, we have people feeding high-quality dog food for $1 a pound. As long as you know what you're looking at, you can find high-quality foods without breaking the bank, and that's good news for everyone. You just have to know what you're looking for. We can get you really good stuff for what you'd pay for a grocery brand, which is a nice trend."

Winoski remains committed to helping customers.

"This has been true from day one, we're truly going to try to help you. What I mean by that is even if it's not in the best interest of the business. I've often told people about a product I might not have, but that I really think it's the right one for a dog. We're really going to do what we think is the best thing for the dog even if it's not the best thing for us," he said. "We love dogs. At the end of the day, we're not doing this for the money. It feels good to know you've helped people have a better life with their dog." **GL**

*Appalachian Tails Pet Company is at 119 Griswold Street. To learn more, call 860-657-2872 or visit appalachiantails.com.*


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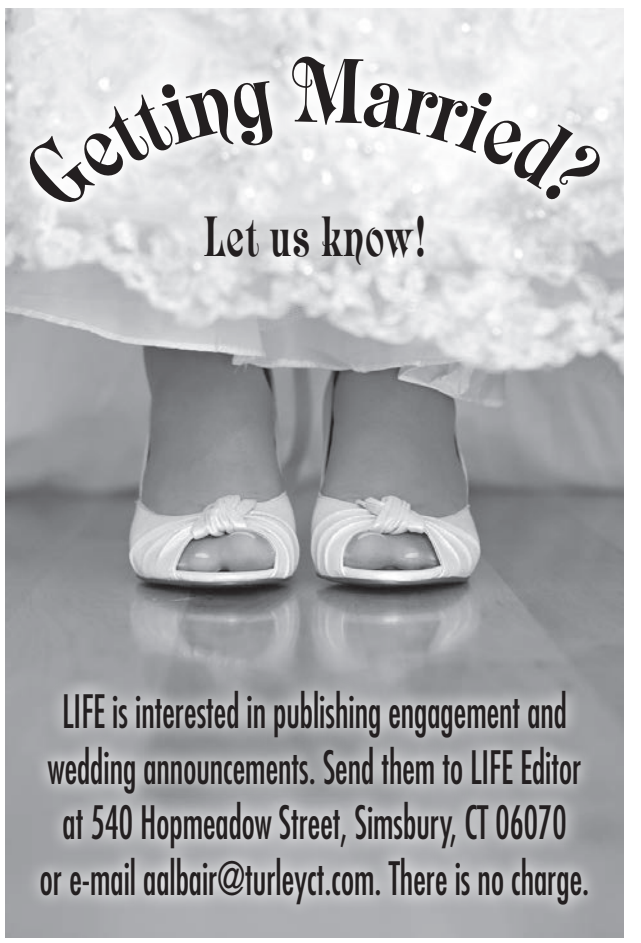
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# Events spotlight

## Blessing of the animals and adopt-a-pet weekend

October 8, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., October 9 noon to 4 p.m.
*Front lawn, St. James' Episcopal Church; inside if rain*
*stjamesglastonbury.org*
Animals will be blessed in honor of the feast day of St. Francis Assisi, and representatives of Connecticut-based pet rescues will be on site for pet adoptions both days. Donations of pet food are welcome.

## Welsh cheese and Connecticut wine evening

October 8, 4 to 7 p.m.
*Directions will be given when guests sign up*
*WelshWNE@gmail.com or 860-987-7097*

The Glastonbury-based Welsh Society of Western New England is presenting its inaugural feast of Welsh cheese and Connecticut wine. Cheese will include Caerphilly, Little Black Bomber and Red Dragon, all paired with wines from the Lebanon Green Winery with wines poured by the vineyard's manager, Donald Joy. Kasha Breau, a traditional harpist and singer, will play original music and folk songs from around the world. Tickets, which must be prepaid, cost $18 for members and $20 for guests.

## Dinner in Jerusha's Kitchen

October 16, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
*Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St.*
*860-633-6890 or hsgct.org*
Guests to this annual event sponsored by the Historical Society of Glastonbury will journey back to the 18th century to prepare and enjoy a colonial meal cooked in one of the largest known period fireplaces in the state. The menu includes pork cormarye, seasonal vegetables and greens from the house's gardens, artisanal bread and apple pie, as well as pounded cheese and crackers with Glastenbury cider. Seating is limited and resreva-tions are required. $55. All proceeds benefit the Historical Society of Glastonbury's education and preservation projects.

## Apple Harvest Festival

October 14, 6 to 10 p.m.
October 15, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
October 16, noon to 5 p.m.
*Riverfront Community Center lawn*
*crvchamber.org or 860- 659-3587*
This is the 42nd year for the festival, which is rated as one of the best annual events in the state. The festival will feature 30 bands performing on three states, a vendor village, amusement rides for all ages, beer and wine at the Angry Orchard Pub, fireworks on Saturday, a 5K race and kids' fun run and a bicycle scavenger hunt. Free parking and shuttle bus service from Glastonbury High School will be available. Admission is $3 Friday and $5 Saturday and Sunday, with no charge for children three feet tall and under.

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EDUCATION

Josh Steffenson, who is known for his hands-on and exciting classes, lies of a bed of nails to demonstrate a principal of physics.

Nancy Thompson photo

# Presidential award winner is the town's teacher of the year

## Josh Steffenson's classroom is a place of infectious enthusiasm

**by Nancy Thompson**
*Editor*

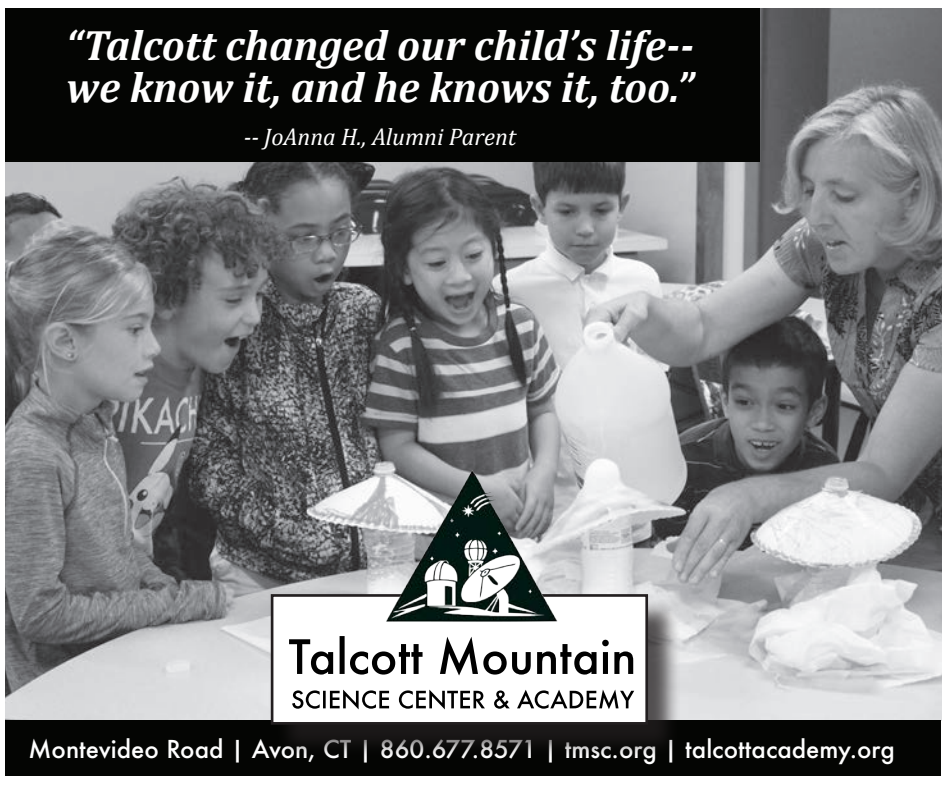
If Josh Steffenson had heeded the advice of his college counselor, he would not be this year's teacher of the year. He wouldn't be a teacher at all.

Steffenson was born in Montana but lived most of his life in Minnesota before enrolling at Gustavus Adolphus College. He discovered physics was in high school, where he said he had a wonderful teacher. The experience convinced him to major in physics and become a high school teacher.

"I met with my advisor and he told me that being a high school physics teacher would be the worst decision I could ever make," Steffenson said. "I would make less money and work longer hours."

Despite the advisor's comments, Steffenson decided to major in physics anyway, since he enjoyed it and was good at it.

He studied in Australia for a semester during his junior year and while there met the young woman from Connecticut who would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# EDUCATION

become his wife. After returning to the U.S. he helped to run an elementary summer science program) in Keene, New Hampshire. It was his first experience with teaching, and he enjoyed it.

He had decided to use his physics major to become an aerospace engineer and was considering going to graduate school at Boston University or the University of Colorado at Boulder. While visiting Boston, he learned about a program at the University of New Haven where he could earn a master's degree in education and, setting his advisor's warning aside, enrolled there instead and earned a master's degree in secondary science.

Steffenson's mother wasn't sure he was making the right decision, not because of the money or the hours, but because she didn't think he had the patience to be a high school teacher.

In fact, he said, the opposite has proven true.

"There is no time that I'm more relaxed or calm or happy than when I'm in the classroom," he said with a smile.

In the 11 years Steffenson, who lives in Manchester with his wife, Julie, and his daughters, June and Josie, has been at Glastonbury High School he has advised two robotics clubs, one of which won a national championship in 2013 in Fargo, N.D. Last year he mentored a team of students who designed, built and launched rockets, and most recently he has been working with other science teachers and the Glastonbury Education Foundation to bring a new science laboratory to the high school. The lab, which will include about $100,000 worth of equipment funded by the foundation, will be similar to those found in colleges and universities. He also is working on an interactive iBook that will be used in advanced placement physics classes at the high school.

Outside the classroom, he served as president of the Glastonbury Education Association and has presented local and regional workshops. As the association's president, it was his job to present a gift to the teacher of the year. This year he was the recipient.

**He brings excitement into every class with enthusiasm that is infectious.**

**– School Superintendent Alan Bookman**

Along the way, Steffenson earned a national reputation for excellence as a teacher, including the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching, presented by President Obama at the White House, last year.

"We went in through the front door of the White House," he said. "The president had been told by his handlers that there wasn't enough time to shake everyone's hands, but he decided to do it anyway. It was four days straight of people telling you that you're valued and asking your opinion. It was re-energizing."

He said he learned in early June that he had been selected as teacher of the year. Teachers are nominated by colleagues earlier in the spring and write documents with biographical information similar to what is found on a resume, along with their philosophy of teaching. Former teachers of the year go over those documents and choose a winner, who must keep it secret from all but their immediate family until the teachers' convocation just before the new school year begins.

He had to tell his wife and daughters, who were there for the convocation, to stay out of sight until the announcement was made. "Everyone knows my kids," he said.

Nancy Bean, the principal of Glastonbury High School, said

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# EDUCATION

Steffenson stands out as "a truly outstanding educator" because of his skill in the classroom, his understanding of children and their needs, and his ability to be a leader among his colleagues.

"Through my observations of Josh's classroom, it is clear students thrive in his classroom because of the high expectations he holds for them and the quality of instruction he consistently provides," she said. "Josh establishes challenging learning objectives for all students and supports them in mastering the skills and concepts associated with physics. As a result of this high-quality instruction, Josh's students are actively involved, engaged learners and critical thinkers who come deeply to understand the concepts they are investigating."

School Superintendent Alan Bookman has known Steffenson since he was hired by the school system 11 years ago.

"In Josh Steffenson, you will not find a teacher who relies on a textbook, Bookman said. "In his classroom, you will find an inquiry methodology and higher learning and thinking activities. He brings excitement into every class with enthusiasm that is infectious. For all these wonderful methods of teaching, he has developed tremendous rapport with his students. Josh has a sense of what to do and what not to do, and that makes Josh a most successful teacher and mentor to all his students. Josh is a professional in every sense of the word. I noted a physics workshop in which he and two other teachers presented for three hours to many physics teachers from around the state. He received highest reviews for his work."

He also praised Steffenson's knownledge of technology as "outstanding."

Steffenson said the main challenge in teaching high school physics is that education changes so fast. "It takes unbelievable effort to keep up with the changes and be good," he said. "Physics is the one constant. When I started we had three computers for all the science teachers. It's completely different now. Ten years ago we taught an area of a book. Now textbooks don't make sense any more. I don't use the same handout from the year before because now there's a better way."

And the best part? "That's easy," he said. "The kids." **GL**

Courtesy photo

**Josh Steffenson is Glastonbury's Teacher of the Year.**


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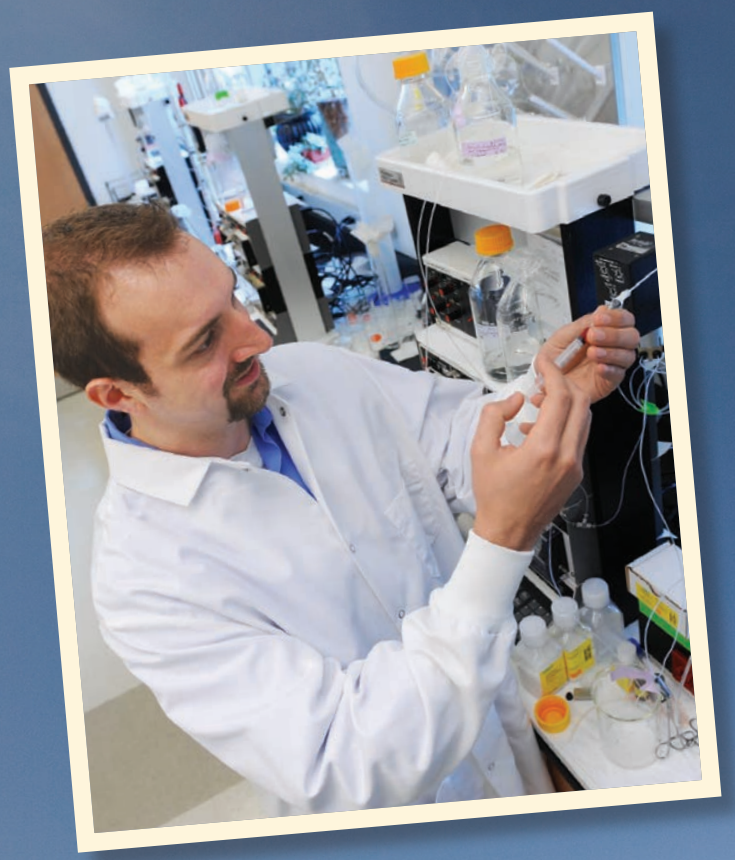

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# Breaking dyslexia stereotypes

Dyslexia affects as many as 17 percent of school children in the United States, making it the most commonly identified learning issue according to the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity. In Canada, between 15 and 20 percent of the population has dyslexia, says The Reading Clinic in Ontario. In spite of its prevalence, dyslexia is still widely misunderstood.

### What is dyslexia?

The Mayo Clinic notes that dyslexia is marked by difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words. Dyslexia is more than just seeing letters or words backwards, as it also may be characterized by difficulty comprehending rapid instructions and remembering the sequence of things. Some people with dyslexia may have trouble seeing and hearing similarities and differences in letters and words. Many children with dyslexia read below the expectations for their age.

### Dyslexia warning signs.

Parents who are concerned about dyslexia can recognize some early warning signs, including:

- delayed speech;
- difficulty learning and remembering names of letters;
- reading or writing showing repetitions, additions, transpositions, omissions, substitutions, and reversals in letters, numbers and/or words;
- complaints of feeling or seeing movement in words while reading or writing;
- reading and rereading with little comprehension; and
- difficulty putting things into words.

### What causes dyslexia?

Doctors and researchers have yet to identify a single cause of dyslexia, but genes and brain differences do play a role. Dyslexia often runs in families, and certain genes are associated with reading and language processing issues.

Many people with dyslexia have above-average intelligence, but other differences in the brain may be apparent through scans. According to the organization Understood, an organization aiming to help parents of children with learning disabilities, the planum temporale area of the brain plays a role in understanding language. It is typically larger in the dominant hemisphere (the left side of the brain for right-handed people) than in the less-dominant side. However if a child has dyslexia, the planum temporale is probably about the same size on both the left and right sides of the brain.

Schools and parents can do much to help children with dyslexia succeed in the classroom. Accommodations in class, such as extra time on tests or word-prediction or dictation software, can help immensely. Children also may benefit from smaller group instruction, as well as a multisensory approach to link listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In addition to these steps, adults can boost confidence in children with dyslexia. Enabling kids to explore hobbies and experience successes both in and out of the classroom can help youngsters improve their self-esteem.

MANCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## *October Events*

**The Common Read Presents "The Art of the Harlem Renaissance".** 10/4, 1:00 p.m., SBM Charitable Foundation Auditorium. Please join us for an engaging afternoon with Assistant Professor Olivia Chiang. Info: Rosalyn Wormack at 860-512-2618 or email rwormack@manchestercc.edu.

**Interviewing Tips.** 10/5, 12 p.m., SSC L107. Job seekers will gain insight into frequently asked interview questions and other tips that can help lead to a successful interview. Info: Julie Greene at 860-512-3372 or email jgreene@manchestercc.edu.

**Job Search Strategies and Cover Letter Writing Tips.** 10/12, 12 p.m., SSC L107. This workshop will help individuals identify strategies and techniques for managing a comprehensive and effective job search and maximizing the impact of a cover letter. Info: Julie Greene at 860-512-3372 or email jgreene@manchestercc.edu.

**Health Careers Admission Information Sessions.** GPA Community Commons. Students interested in being admitted into a Health Careers credit program must attend a mandatory information session before applying. Info: Theresa Blake at 860-512-2704 or email tblake@manchestercc.edu.

**Dental Assistant.** 10/14, 9 a.m.
**Occupational Therapy Assistant.** 10/14, 10 a.m.
**Respiratory Care.** 10/14, 11 a.m.
**Radiologic Science.** 10/14, 12 p.m.

**Making Effective Career Choices.** 10/19, 12 p.m., SSC L107. Learn how to make effective career choices through the use of traditional and online career-guidance assessment tools. Match your interests and personality types with career fields and traditional position titles, identify typical educational paths that one can take to become qualified for specific positions, and learn about available online resources that can assist you in your research process. Info: Julie Greene at 860-512-3372 or email jgreene@manchestercc.edu.

**The 19th Annual Empty Bowl Project.** 10/22, 11 a.m., SSC Culinary Arts Center. Buy a handmade ceramic bowl and you can enjoy unlimited soup and bread. The ceramic bowl is a reminder that over 128,000 people, including over 50,000 children, experience hunger in the greater Tolland and Hartford counties. Info: Kathy Kern at 860-512-2794 or email kkern@manchestercc.edu.

**College Goal Sunday.** 10/22, 11 a.m., SSC Lobby 1st Floor. Students and parents can connect with financial aid advisors and get in-depth help filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In addition to receiving assistance in filling out the FAFSA, participants will receive general information regarding state and federal financial aid programs. Info: 860-512-3380 or email geninfofinancialaid@manchestercc.edu.

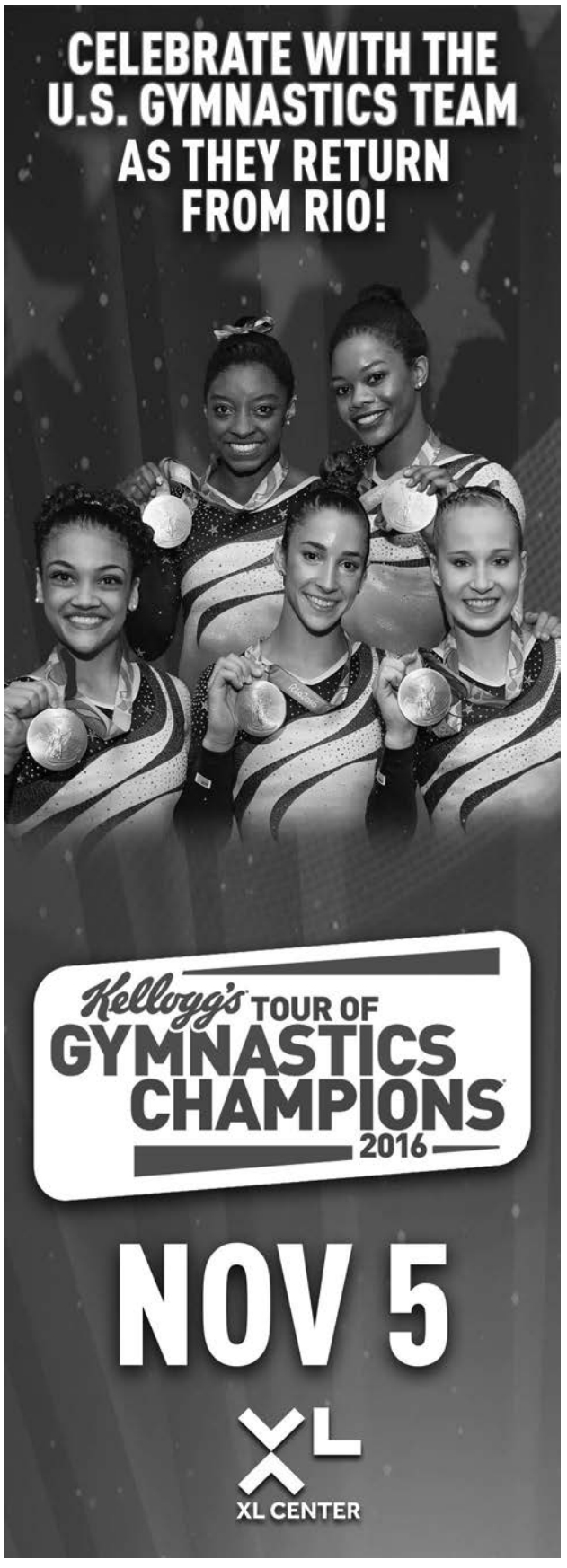
**Effective Resume Writing.** 9/28, 12 p.m., SSC L107. Improve your visibility in the job market with information on the skills and strategies needed to develop a resume that gets positive response from employers. Info: Julie Greene at 860-512-3372 or email jgreene@manchestercc.edu.

**Transfer Fair.** 10/27, 10 a.m., SBM Charitable Foundation Building Rotunda. Ready to transfer your credits? Current and former students will have the opportunity to meet with representatives from more than 50 colleges and universities to answer questions regarding admission requirements, transfer scholarships and other educational opportunities. Info: Robert C. Turner, Jr. at 860-331-3328 or email rturner@manchestercc.edu.

**Women's Work: Artist Reception/Artist Talk.** 10/27, 6 p.m., Hans Weiss Newspace Gallery, SBMCF Building. An exhibition of art created by women, curated by Alexandrea Leone '12 and Rachel Rubenbauer '12, MCC fine arts alumni. The show runs through November 30. Info: Susan Classen-Sullivan at 860-512-2693 or email sclassen-sullivan@manchestercc.edu.

*All events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted, and are subject to change without notice. For current information or notices of cancellation, click on "View All Events" on MCC's web site: www.manchestercc.edu.*

*10/2016*



# Local author
## highlights crafts and more
### Several local businesses are featured

**by Nancy Thompson**
*Editor*

Cindy Parzych has spent decades in the publishing business here and abroad. She has written elegant coffee-table books and restaurant reviews, helped create books about fine art and owned her own publishing company for more than two decades. In her newest book, Connecticut Made, Parzych looks closer to home.

The book features an assortment of what Parzych describes as "homegrown products by local craftsmen, artisan, and purveyors" around the state, including several in Glastonbury.

It's a bit of a new focus for Parzych, who grew up in New Britain and graduated from Trinity College with a degree in art and art history as part of the first class that included women. After college, she found a job as part of the design crew for windows at the G. Fox store in Hartford, wrote for the Hartford Advocate and did some waitressing and bartending on the side.

She met a waited who suggested she look for a job in Mystic. That job led her to New York, where she met Henry N. Abrams, a world-renowned publisher of art books.

"It was a Cinderella story," she said. "I was at this event wearing a thrift shop dress."

He offered her a job and she moved to New York, found an apartment, and started working side-by-side with him in his office. It was a fairy-tale existence.

"Every major New York artist walked in the door that first week," Parzych said. "I was star-struck."

She worked for Abrams for three and a half years, learning how to buy art prints and do books. "I learned it all," she said.

She moved to a publishing company where she served as "sort of a middleman," hiring authors, organizing contracts, making deals to finance books and selling rights to other publishers. "It was a great way to run a small book business," she said. "I got to know all this.

She went on to work at WH Smith, an English publishing company, but that job ended when the company closed its trade division. The move gave Parzych's career a new turn.

"At that pint an entrepreneur was born," she said. She created Cynthia Parzych Publishing, Inc., and became known internationally for her high-quality books about art, wine, good, history, nature and science.

While in England she met John Turner, a successful entrepreneur. They married and spent several years traveling back and forth between New York, where Parzych lived in a small apartment, and London, where Turner lived in a townhouse with a 360-degree view of London. "We had a rip-roar-

ing good time," she recalled.

When Turner was diagnosed with melanoma in 2002, the couple sought treatment, first in Middletown and then at Yale, eventually settling in Glastonbury to be close to his physicians. When Turner died in 2009, Parzych decided to stay here.

"It took me a while to pull my bootstraps up again. Glastonbury is not a bad place to do that," she said. "It's a beautiful place. I spent two years just getting better."

Slowly, she returned to writing and her publishing business, which includes books about Arlington National Cemetery and Antietam, site of a major battle during the Civil War, and to her love of gardening and gourmet cooking.

"We traveled through our stomachs when my husband was alive," she said, adding that she learned cooking skills along the way.

She started growing herbs and vegetables at her historic Main Street home and looked for new ways to use them.

"I had to figure out what I could put in jars," she said. Her creations include delicacies such as chive flower vinegar and rhubarb-orange compote, as well as relishes, soups, sauces, tarts, pickles, marmalades and jams. "Whatever I can put together," she said with a laugh.

She sells them through word of mouth and has loyal clients who stop by regularly to see what's available.

Connecticut Grown came about through her love of food and her interest in history and small businesses. "I thought, what a great way to get people to travel in the state – visit and buy things."

Her blurbs include information about the history of the places she's visited, along with contact information. "It was just great fun to do," she said.

Local businesses include Dee's One Smart Cookie on Hebron Avenue, Fintar Guitars on Naubuc Avenue, Joseph Preli Farm and Vineyards on Hopewell Road, Killam & Bassette Farmstead, LLC, on Tryon Street, Phoenix Welding on Naubuc Avenue, Rose's Berry Farm on Matson Hill Road, So. G Coffee Roasters on Main Street, and Woodland Farm, LLC, on Woodland Street.

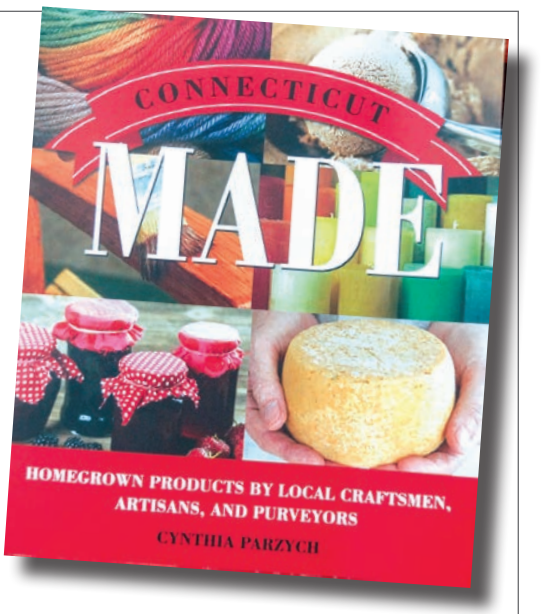
Claire McCabe is one of Parzych's friends and a frequent companion on her travels for the book. They met through mutual friends almost 10 years sgo and share many of the same interests.

"We both like looking for old things in life, like tag sales and we like to repurpose stuff," McCabe said. "We spend a lot of time with friends."

She said she admires Parzych for her experiences and her exposure to other cultures as well for her cooking prowess and ability as a hostel.

"She is the best hostel in the world. She can whip up a dinner that could throw anybody off kilter," she said. "Her taste buds are so refined. She can pick out various tastes."

McCabe said she has learned a lot about cooking by watching and listening to Parzych. "Her table is like a banquet table, and she handles it with such ease," she said. "She puts me at ease when I cook."




Their shared love of discovering new places came in handy when Parzych started her research for Connecticut Grown.

"We like to go exploring to different little shops," McCabe said. "It was fun, it was a lot of fun. She's just a different type of a friend. She has a really good heart and is a really colorful person." GL

*Connecticut Grown is available at Barnes & Noble and on amazon.com.*

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# Your thoughts

***After the long, hot days of summer, there's a chill in the air. A lot of folks look forward to autumn – and not just because the kids are back in school! Glastonbury LIFE wanted to see what people most look forward to in the fall. Here is some of what they said:***

**Lucy Webb**
Cool weather and waiting for the mums to bloom and the changing of the leaves. It's so pretty. It's my favorite season.

**Suzanne Hegener**
I'm looking forward to the cooler temperatures and being able to be outside more because the summer time was too hot to really be able to enjoy the outdoors.

**Mitzi Bognar**
Halloween! And hayrides, corn mazes, the cooler weather – I could go on for hours!

# Where to FIND IT

## In a jam

The tastes of summer will last all through the winter when you buy homemade jam with your favorite fruits, straight from the farm! Try blackberry, strawberry rhubarb, blueberry, blueberry/raspberry, strawberry, triple berry or peach. They're $7 for each 8-ounce jar, or choose three for $20. You'll find them at Rose's Berry Farm, 295 Matson Hill Road, South Glastonbury (main farm) and 1200 Hebron Avenue, Glastonbury (farm stand), 860-633-7467, rosesberryfarm.com.

## Amazing apple options

Autumn means it's apple season! And Deercrest Farm has delicious options that will carry you through the coldest months. Try their unpasteurized sweet cider or, for a little kick, give their hard cider a whirl. They're pressed in the cider mill next to the farm. Add a special touch to your favorite recipes with apple cider vinegar. Choose plain or infused with garlic, raspberries or berries. Find them at Deercrest Farm, celebrating more than 50 years, 3499 Hebron Avenue, 860-633-4407, deercrestfarm.com.

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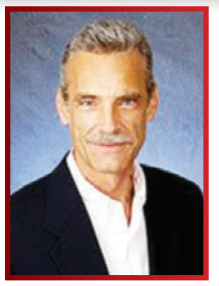

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# Slice of LIFE

photos by Brian Ambrose

## Pooh's Pageant

This year's Pooch Pageant sponsored by the town's parks and recreation department attracted a variety of dog and their young friends.

**1.** Participants and judges gather for a group photo. **2.** Noah Cady and dog Skye get ready for the judges. **3.** Kaitlyn Bellefore and Randy, a Welsh springer spaniel, walk before the judges. **4.** Samantha, Catherine and Christina Daniels and Romo show off their winning costumes. **5.** Thomas and Millie Meredith hold their first-place trophy for Branston, who won the prize for being the best behaved dog. **6.** Harrison, Georgia, and Elise Adams enjoy a quiet moment with their mom, Marissa and Quincy, who won the Best in Show award. **7.** Colleen Kirk and Toby have a fun time at the show. **8.** Katherine Daniels and Samantha Daniels get a kiss from her dog, Romo. **9.** Danny Kirk as the Joker, Toby as Batman, and Alexandra Yelle with Roosevelt as Robin are a dynamic quartet. **10.** Eloise Smith and Suzie, a chihuaha-terrier, cuddle up on a park bench. **11.** Mallory Shea and Clyde took second place in their costumes. **12.** The pageant's judges take official measurements of the dogs. **13.** Sam Cady tryies to keep Skye under control during judging. **14.** Judges Bobby Dibella, Linda Cadario and Mike Roberts deliberate.

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# Business Notes

Margaret Wilcox, vice-president of sales at **William Raveis Real Estate** and team leader of Margaret Wilcox and Associates, has been named a Woman of FIRE for 2016 by The Commercial Record. The award recognizes key women in local finance, insurance and real estate businesses.

**Monaco Ford** raised more than $3,300 for the Wounded Warriors family support program through a car show in August and additional donations.

**Fiondella, Milone & LaSaracina,** a local certified public accounting firm, took home the title and the trophy in a charity kickball tournament sponsored by the Connecticut Society of CPAs New and Young Professionals Group. The competition raised $1,825 for Foundation for Life, a charity that works to improve the quality of life for people in the Northeast. Money raised in the tournament will be used to buy bikes for local children in need.

**E.A. Quinn Landscape Contracting, Inc.** has been recognized for several achievements relating to work safety by the National Association of Landscape Professionals. The company was recognized for having no vehicle accidents, no injuries or illnesses and no days away from work.

**The S/L/A/M Collaborative** renovated a 3,800-square foot black box theater that is the new home of Sea Tea Improv. The comedy group has entertained Hartford-area audiences at a variety of venues, but this is the first home of its own. The theater has seating for 80 guests, a ticket window and refreshment area and other features, including seating that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"SLAM was proud to be selected by Sea Tea to design their new home, and we really enjoyed collaborating with them to create a space that gives them the room to showcase their many talents," said Dan Harazim, the project manager and designer. "We are also glad to be able to contribute to the continued growth of downtown Hartford." The new theater is in the basement at 15 Asylum Street in Hartford.

**Close to Home** is inviting sewers to create nightshirts for patients at the 12-bed hospice unit at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. The sessions will take place October 14 and 15 from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The fabric is precut, an instructor will direct the sewing operations, and the store staff will help with using the machines. Sewing experience is not required. Refreshments will be provided by Subway in Portland and hospice volunteers. Close to Home is at 277 Hebron Ave. Anyone who would like to help may sign up by calling 860-633-0721.

Kim Poulin of **Picture Perfect Landscape & Christmas Décor** is seeking nominations of active-duty military families and families of veterans for Christmas Décor's 13th annual Decorated Family program. Christmas Décor franchisees participate in a national program by donating products, resources and time to decorate the homes of selected military families. Anyone who would like to nominate a family may visit christmasdecor.net and click on the link for nominations. The program started in 2003, and the deadline for nominations is November 11. **GL**

# News roundup

## Bereavement groups offered

Hartford HealthCare at Home Hospice Care is offering two free bereavement support groups in October. The groups, which take place monthly on the first and third Wednesdays, will meet October 5 and 19 at the Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St. with Bill Piklington as facilitator. To learn more, call 855-442-4373.

## Chorus seeks new members

The Glastonbury Chorus is welcoming new members through early October. Auditions are not required, and all ranges are welcome. Singers must be at least 18 but do not need choral experience.

Rehearsals will take place on Wednesdays 7to 9 p.m. in music room 2 at Smith Middle School, 216 Addison Rd.

The Chorus will present a holiday concert at 4 p.m. December 4 in the school's auditorium. To learn more about the chorus, visit glastonburychorus.org.

## Tax expert volunteers sought

The AARP is looking for tax experts available to volunteer to help low-to-moderate-income residents in town prepare and file their federal and state tax returns. Last season expert volunteers helped more than 376 local clients, more than 75 percent of whom were seniors, with tax preparation services and returned more than $375,000 in credits and refunds to those clients. The volunteers are available during the tax season. The schedule for next year will depend on the number of experts who volunteer to help. Anyone who would like to volunteer may visit aarp.org/tax-aide

## Tickets available for education foundation gala

Tickets are available for this year's gala sponsored by the Glastonbury Education Foundation. The event, a fundraiser for the foundation, will take place November 18 from 6 to 11 p.m. at A Villa Louisa in Bolton.

The gala will include a family-style dinner, a live band, wine raffle and dancing, a live auction with television personality, meteorologist and town resident Joe Furey as master of ceremonies and a silent auction featuring a piece of jewelry donated by Baribault Jewelers.

This year's theme is 3D, which stands for develop, design, discover. Money raised at the event will go toward a $100,000 grant to be awarded by the foundation to Glastonbury High School for a new cutting-edge robotics, engineering, science and technology lab scheduled to open next fall.

Tickets cost $135, and table sponsorships begin at $1,600. To buy tickets, visit glastonburyeducationfoundation.org. Businesses interested in sponsoring a table or donating an item for the auction

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may contact the foundation at 860-652-7200, ext. 2057 or by emailing director@glastonburyeducationfoundation.org.

## Winning poster unveiled

Paul Misciagno of Strand Salon has designed the winning poster for this year's Apple Harvest Festival.

Prints of the poster are on sale at the CT River Valley Chamber of Commerce on Main Street and will be available for purchase at the chamber's pie booth at the festival.

The Bodeau Realty Group at William Raveis is the exclusive sponsor of the commemorative poster, which will be displayed in businesses and gathering spots around town. For details, call 860-659-3587 or visit crvchamber.org.

Courtesy Photo

## Community conversation scheduled

Several town residents who work to promote social justice will take part in a forum sponsored by the Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative this month.

The event, titled "Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things: How Glastonbury Residents Have Reached Across Racial, Ethnic, Religious, Economic and Gender Boundaries and Made a Difference," will take place October 20 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Riverfront Community Center and will be moderated and facilitated by Dick Allen, senior minister at the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury.

The evening still start with a half-hour informal reception during which people will have an opportunity to talk with the participants.

In addition to Allen, who has served as a Peace Corps volunteer and pastor at churches on the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota and in Wisconsin and has been here since 1988, participants will include the following:

Erin Boggs, executive director of Open Communities Alliance, a civil rights organization promoting access to opportunity and housing. She has worked as a staff attorney and interim legal director for the state chapter of the

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American Civil Liberties Union, as deputy director of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, and as a consultant to a statewide study of housing practices. She is a graduate of Wesleyan University and Georgetown University School of Law;

Bonnie Clark, president of the board of directors for the local ABC House, which offers young minority men an opportunity to get an excellent in public and private schools throughout the U.S. She is a teacher in the Hartford Public School System and has served on the ABC House board of directors since 2001;

Eileen Culliane, the social justice chairperson and a trustee at St. Dunstan's Roman Catholic Church, started a garden where she and her volunteers raise vegetables to supply food pantries here and in Hartford and also has enlisted the help of local farmers who donate additional food.

Chris George, the executive director of Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, which helps resettle more than 400 refugees each year with the help of thousands of volunteers and supporters;

Thomas McKee, a retired commander with the local police department who has worked closely with the local housing authority and the youth and family services department and has taught police offices in several Middle Eastern and Eastern European countries about human rights and professional policing. He also has been a community policing consultant to several organizations;

Rochelle Ripley, founder and president of hawkwing, a non-profit, all volunteer organization that provides services and support for the people of the Cheyenne River Lakota (Sioux) Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Under Ripley's leadership, hawkwing has delivered goods and services worth about $9 million to the Lakota people. She was honored as one of CNN's top ten heroes last year;

Alan Spier, a retired business attorney and long-time Glastonbury resident, has run a program that allows 40 high school students from Hartford to attend a four-day, hands-on environmental study program run by the Appalachian Mountain Club in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. He organized the Trust for a Mountain Classroom, Inc., which raises the $20,000 needed each year for the program, serves as its president and chief executive, and participates in the program as a chaperone.

Anna Tansi is involved with Heads Up! Hartford, a non-profit, volunteer, faith-based organization made up of urban and suburban youths and adult advisers wo work to build communities, promote diversity, develop leadership and provide a variety of community services;

Meg Taylor, executive director of Capital Squash, an organization based at Trinity College that works to help young people in Hartford realize their potential as athletes, students and engaged citizens through the sport of squash and with educational support, mentoring and community service activities. She is the daughter of David Taylor, one of the pastors at First Church Congregational;

Dawne Westbrook is a judge of the Connecticut Superior Court, where she deals with issues where an awareness of racial, ethnic, economic, gender and religious divides are critically important. She has served as a member of the board of directors of the Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative and has volunteered for many school-related activities. **GL**


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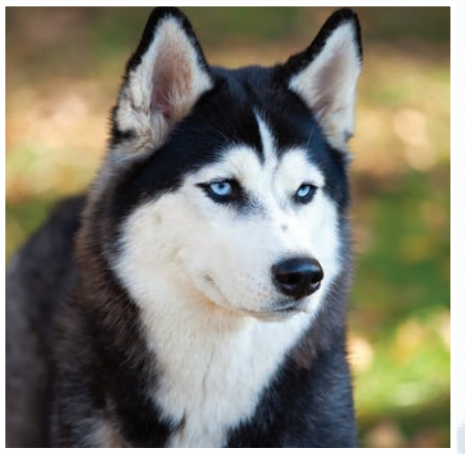

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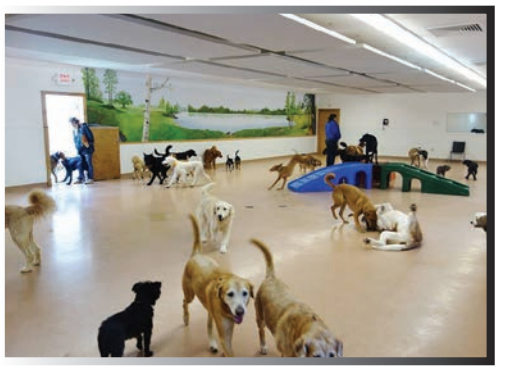

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## Jonathan

Jonathan is a 1-year-old guinea pig who was brought to the humane society because his first home included a dog who thought the little guy was meant to be a snack. He likes attention and feasting on mixed greens. He's also a music lover and sometimes even sings along.

*Inquiries about adoption may be made at the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Road, Newington. Call 860-594-4500. More information, including videos, can be found online at cthumane.org. Click on "Adopt" and "Newington." The Connecticut Humane Society is a private organization and has no time limits for adoption.*

## Princess

Princess is a 3-year-old terrier, pit bull and boxer mix. She is best suited for life in a single-family home and any children should be 12 or older. Other cats and dogs in the house are fine with her. She is an active pooch and needs lots of exercise; the best match for her is a family with previous active dog experience. Ongoing obedience training is part of her adoption plan. GL


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# Letters

## Supports Srinivasan

**To the Editor:**

I write to express my strong support for the re-election of Prasad Srinivasan as Glastonbury's state representative. In an era where political debate sounds more like kids fighting on the playground than leaders discussing our future, Prasad is a reminder that there are still people of integrity, intellect, and dedication who sincerely listen to all sides of an issue, seek the facts, exchange ideas respectfully, and make their decisions thoughtfully. I know from personal contacts that Prasad is highly regarded by the members of both political parties in the General Assembly, and his idea and opinions are valued by all of his colleagues.

Glastonbury is fortunate to have someone of Prasad's character and judgment representing us in Hartford, and Connecticut is fortunate to have the benefit of his wisdom and hard work. I hope you will join me in voting for Prasad Srinivasan.

*– Mark Branse*

## Urges support for GOP

**To the Editor:**

With so much attention focused on the presidential campaign, it's easy to forget about the races here at home. And who can blame voters for wanting a distraction from the dismal state of our state?

Just this year, George Mason University ranked Connecticut's fiscal condition dead last among the 50 states. Connecticut also finished last in Thumbtack's Small Business Friendliness Survey. CNBC's listing of America's Top States for Business ranked Connecticut 47th in its cost of doing business and 46th in its cost of living.

Amazingly, Gov. Malloy and the Democrats in our state legislature seem to think that the way to get us out of this fiscal hole is to dig deeper. Every year, we see budgets hopelessly out of balance held together by duct tape, chewing gum and revenue projections that would make Bernie Madoff blush. The Democrats aren't just ignoring the problem – they are the problem.

Six years ago, Glastonbury took a first step toward righting the ship when we elected Prasad Srinivasan as our state representative. A Glastonbury resident and small business owner for more than thirty years, Prasad combined the level head of a skilled physician with the courage of a man who entered politics to serve us rather than to aggrandize himself. He has been a consistent voice for fiscal responsibility, quality healthcare and local control.

But Prasad cannot fix this mess alone. Two years ago, voters sent Mark Tweedie to join him in the General Assembly. Born and raised in Manchester, Mark is a Navy veteran and a local small business owner who previously served on the Manchester Town Council. Mark has been a strong advocate for improving the climate for small businesses, supporting education and honoring our veterans.

Now, we can take another step forward by electing Lorraine Marchetti as our state senator. Lorraine served for 12 years on Glastonbury's board of education and then as the vice-chair of our town council. She has been a key member of a town government that has delivered high quality services while maintaining a triple-A bond rating and minimizing tax increases. Her dedication to putting policy over partisanship will be a refreshing change from our current senator's rubber stamp for the Malloy administration.

On November 8, I encourage all voters to re-elect Prasad Srinivasan and Mark Tweedie and to send Lorraine Marchetti to join them as Glastonbury's voices for change in Hartford.

*– John Tanski*

# Note from Nancy

## The tyrant on my wrist

It's the Mother's Day gift that keeps on nagging.

When our IT-loving son gave me an Amazon.com gift card for Mother's Day, I wanted to thank him by buying something at least a little high-tech. He thinks it's great. I'm not so sure.

It's one of those fitness bands, not an official brand-name Fitbit, but an equally bossy little black silicone bracelet that yips at me in a variety of ways when I don't log in as many steps each day as it thinks I should.

I'm partly to blame, since I set a goal of about three miles a day for myself. I could cut it back to something easier, like a mile or so, but it seems that would negate the purpose of the thing.

Here's the deal – walking a big loop in the neighborhood for 35 minutes every morning and then sitting at the computer – finger movement does not count as actual steps – leaves me about 1,500 steps short. Using our elliptical machine apparently doesn't count at all, so what fun is that? I need to do a second walk or go shopping and leave the car at the farthest point in the parking lot or find some other way to crank out the rest. The neighborhood walk is the easy part. After that? It can be tough. I have to admit, though, I've walked more regularly in the few months since I got it than ever before.

I only hate it when it nags me. Here's the most recent: "It looks like Sunday is usually your least active day of the week. Let's change that today. Is it nice outside? How about a quick 10-minute walk?"

How about taking a sweaty, smelly athletic sock and stuffing it?

Nagging aside, I like that it looks cool, and it kind of reminds me of that silicone "magic band" I wore at Disney World, except this one doesn't open any doors, let me meet any princesses or buy me any food. And despite my complaining, it truly is a great motivator.

Then there's the Glastonbury connection. This town is so encouraging of healthy lifestyles and wellness that it's hard not to want to be part of it in some way. It's impossible to drive around at lunchtime without seeing 20 or more people walking or jogging along sidewalks or riding bikes along the side of the road. The local chamber has been promoting wellness in a variety of ways for years, and I often write about people who run triathlons or marathons or climb enormous mountains, or all of the above. I have tremendous respect for them, but no less respect for the people who simply make a point of getting out and moving each day.

I've done boot camp and I've done boxing fitness classes over the past several years. They were both fun, but there was nobody to nag me to show up for every session. Walking is enjoyable, whether with a neighbor or alone, the price is right, and the tyrant on my wrist keeps me at it.

I just need to figure out how to stop those annoying little messages. But first, I think I'll run outside and do the neighborhood loop again and hit my goal for today.

*– Nancy Thompson*

glastonbury LIFE

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

# 5 years ago, this month!

Do you remember where you were the last weekend of October, 2011? I was actually on the Cape for Halloween experiencing a cold and windy rain, unlike everyone else back in Connecticut.

It was not until the drive back that I realized the magnitude of what transpired.

2011 was quite the year for extreme weather here in Southern New England. In June, there was the long track tornado (EF3) that traveled just north of our border in Massachusetts. Then, roughly 2 months after Irene hit the region, it was October 29th and 30th that "Snowtober" or "Storm Alfred" wreaked havoc on the Nutmeg State (keep in mind naming snowstorms is a WFSB tradition that dates back to 1971 and the days of the Travelers Weather Service). It was heavy, wet snow in tandem with fully leafed trees that led to widespread damage and the state's worst power outage with approximately 880,000 customers being impacted (surpassing Irene's ~800,000 outages). Halloween festivities for many had to be postponed or cancelled.

For comparison -- Sandy, exactly one year later to the day, only led to ~650,000 outages.

The totals from Alfred across Connecticut ranged from just a couple of inches, to two feet! Officially at Bradley International, 12.3" was received, setting a daily snow record and the all-time record for biggest snowstorm in the month of October. **GL**

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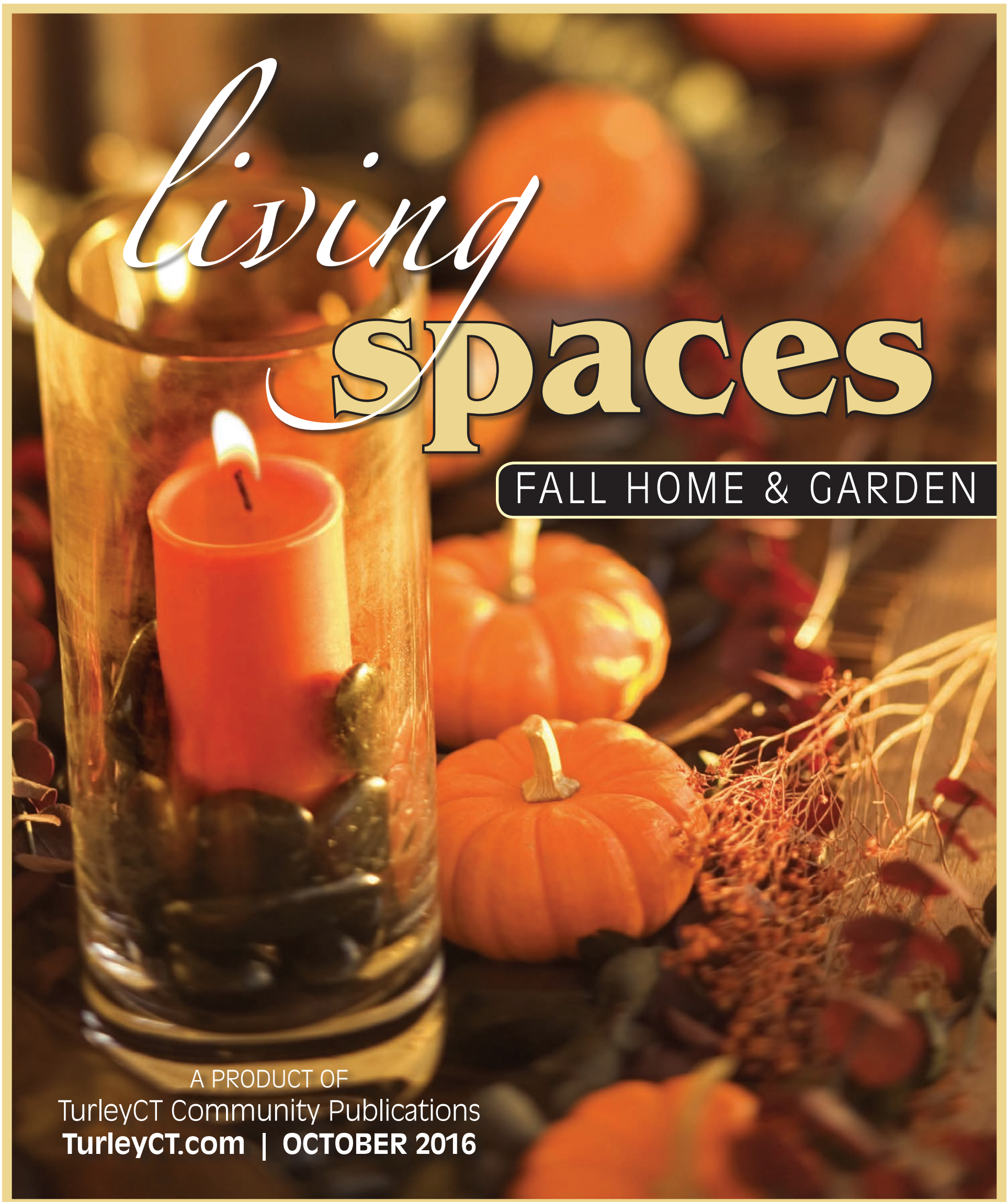
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# Fall in love with Decorating

## How to give your home an autumnal feeling

**by Sloan Brewster**
*Staff Writer*

As the hot days of summer pass behind, add a little warmth to the home.

Carolyn Leining-Lombardi of CT Interior Solutions, in Newington, just started changing some of her decor for fall, she said in a phone call Sept. 13. The tricks she used are ones that anyone can duplicate.

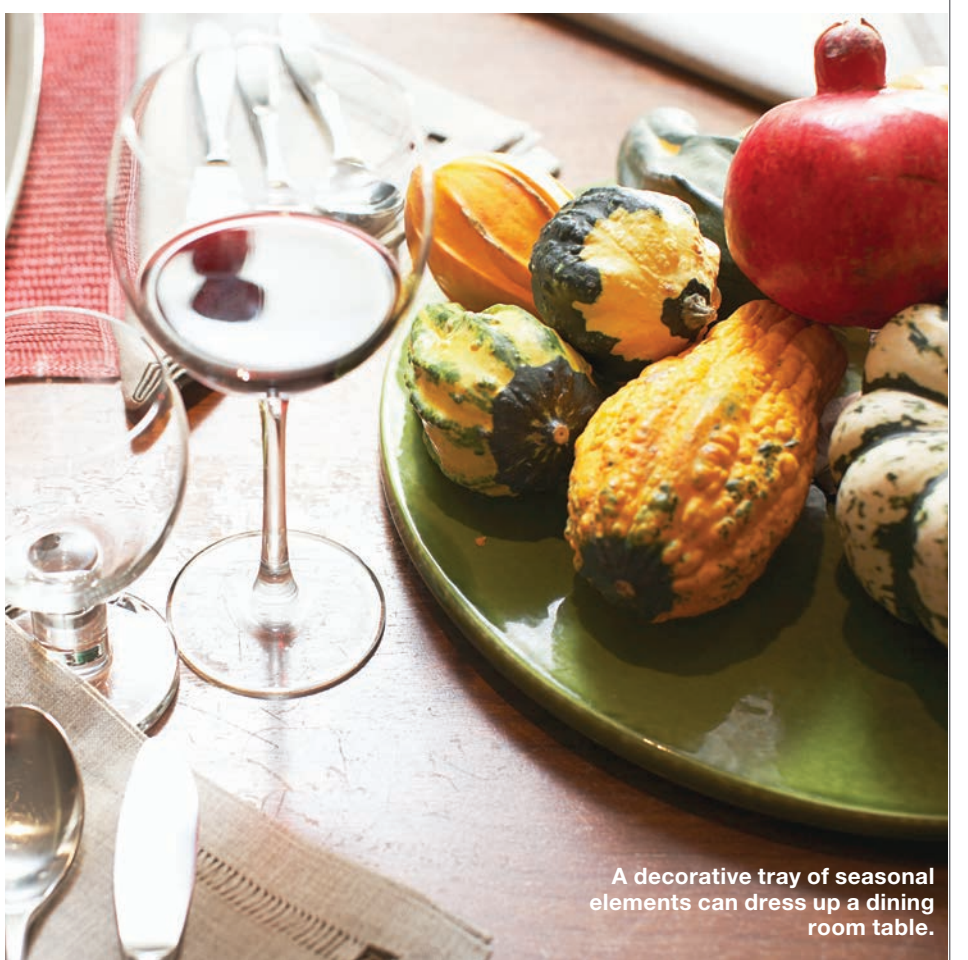
"The coloring all changed," she said. "It's going from very, very light lemony, that cooler feeling for the summer, to warmer tones."

For instance, in place of lemons in a glass vase on the sideboard in her dining room, she put apples and pears.

Across from the vase of apples and pears, she had another vase that she filled with dark red hydrangeas. Next to that, she placed a white candle designed with apples embedded in the wax in a Tuscan pillar candle holder, which she changed from a holder with a summer design and a cool colored candle.

"It kind of pulls it all together," she said of the candle and holder.

On her dining room table, she



A decorative tray of seasonal elements can dress up a dining room table.

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put a decorative tray with light green artichokes, apples and pears, then for fun, in the very center of the tray, she added an old fashioned bicycle made of iron with a bright red seat to pull it all together, she said.

"Now the coloring of that entire kitchen area has changed," Leining-Lombardi said.

Next, she made some changes to the living room,

On her coffee table, she keeps an arrangement of artificial flowers in a blue and white vase. Over the summer the flowers were "white, light and flowy," she said.

For fall, she kept the white ones and added pieces of greenery with purple beads and red roselike flowers.

She is also planning to change her throw pillows to include some warmer fall shades.

**Putting leaves in a lantern with a candle, swapping out decorative plates for ones sporting fall colors and designs and changing pot holders all bring in warmer autumn shades.**

## LIVING Spaces

"It's tiny little things that are so small," she said of how to make season to season alterations.

Simple ideas to add a nice autumn look that Leining-Lombardi suggested others try included putting leaves in a lantern with a candle, swapping out decorative plates for ones sporting fall colors and designs and changing pot holders to sets in

**Outside the home, wreaths and the usual mums and pumpkins will do the trick.**


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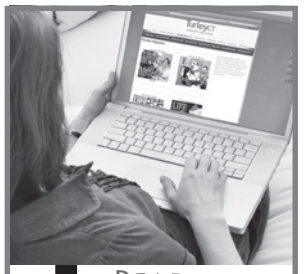
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warmer autumn shades.

"It doesn't mean that you have to go out and buy all new pieces of furniture," she said.

"Smaller pieces can be reinvented to reflect the season.

In her home, she has a place holder hanging on the wall, into which she slides a decorative plate, one that she changes with the time of year.

"That's so easy to change, that could be changed in a blink,"

Leining-Lombardi said. "And they could be changed at Christmas to Christmas plates that you like."

In summer, Leining-Lombardi removes pads from her chairs, but in the winter, she puts them back on.

"Just the idea of material, as opposed to wood itself, will warm it up as well," she said.

In her bedroom, she was planning to retain the white core and change the pillows to shades of gold and blue.

"Blue, white and gold looks very striking together," she said. "Right now, it looks very summery, which is what I wanted."

As she did in other rooms, she was also going to swap out candles and candle holders for darker shades. She also planned to change the lamp in the bedroom.

"It's very little, but it just changes the look," she said.

As the temperatures drop, Leining-Lombardi said she may also add a fur throw and pillow.

"It's fur, it's warm, but that'll be more in late October when it's starting to get chilly.

A few shifts outdoors add to the overall look, Leining-Lombardi added. She recommended the usual mums and adding lanterns with tea lights.

"They go on at the end of the day so that creates warmth as well," she said.

An ornamental plant to incorporate in the fall is a flowering cabbage.

"It looks like a head cabbage," she said. "Pretty greenery adds a nice touch and can even be brought into a home and put in a pot."

Of course, at this time of year, there are pumpkins galore and they're not all orange.

"There are all kinds of pumpkins out there that you can buy," she said. "I'm not particularly fond of orange in my home, but white, the ones that look like vines."

She even had ideas for those whose homes are decorated in colors that generally clash with fall tones. For example, in a home with a lot of pink, add some gray to bring in fall.

"Pink and gray can be worked well together," she said, "different shades of gray that would warm it up."

Gail Bantle, design consultant from RLF Home in Hartford, recommends adding decorative pillows in fall colors and changing window treatments and bedding.

In summer use brighter colors.

"In autumn, in winter, you want the darker, warmer tones because you want it to be cozy," Bantle said.

Table linens, runners and placemats in the right shades will also bring that warm feeling needed for fall, she said.

Some homeowners change the rugs in front of the sink or change knick-knacks throughout the house based on the time of year or holiday.

Bantle also adds flowers with oranges, browns and rust colors and got rid of the geraniums she had in vases during the summer.

"Go to a craft store and pick up some really fun things and place them throughout," she said. "Easy, inexpensive ways to add a fall feeling." **GL**


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# How to tend to an indoor herb garden

Fresh herbs and recently picked ingredients can add flavor to any meal. A home chef can even improve the flavor of store-bought or prepared foods with an herb garnish that can transform otherwise bland dishes into something you'll want to eat again and again.

Harvesting fresh herbs is easy for homeowners who have gardens right in their backyards. However, everyone does not have a backyard, and even those who do might find their gardens threatened by changing seasons or unwanted critters. When gardens are moved indoors, the bounty of fresh ingredients continues no matter the date on the calendar.

Herb gardens are perhaps some of the easiest gardens to cultivate indoors because they don't require large pots or much space. The plants themselves are relatively compact, and it only takes a pinch of herbs to give a meal some extra flavor.

When growing herbs indoors, your indoor growing area must have adequate light to simulate the longer days of summer; otherwise, the plants may go dormant. It's ideal to have a southern exposure on the herbs, with at least eight hours of sunlight per day. If you do not live in a particularly sunny locale, consider supplementing the plants with grow lights, which will provide the full spectrum of light the plants need to thrive.

Indoor air can become too dry for herbs, so you will need to compensate by providing humidity. While there may be added humidity in a kitchen greenhouse window, it still may not be enough to keep the plants healthy. Think about misting the plants daily to create some extra humidity, or place herb pots on top of a water-filled tray with pebbles so the evaporating water will add moisture without making the roots soggy.

Insects are another threat to indoor gardens because there is no cold weather to inhibit the hatching of insect eggs. Soil from outdoors may be more susceptible to insects that are already living in the dirt. Instead of soil from outside, use packaged soil or a nonsoil alternative that will hold moisture without the added risk of bugs. If small insects appear, use a mist of soapy water to kill the bugs without harming the plants or making the herbs unfit for eating.

Group herbs together according to their watering needs to make maintenance that much easier. New sprouts generally need more water than established plants.

Prune the herbs as needed for recipes. If the herbs experience a growth spurt, trim some of the plants and freeze the herbs for later use.

Many indoor herb gardeners begin by growing parsley, chives, oregano, and basil, but you can experiment with just about any herb. **GL**

A sunny location is necessary when cultivating an indoor herb garden.

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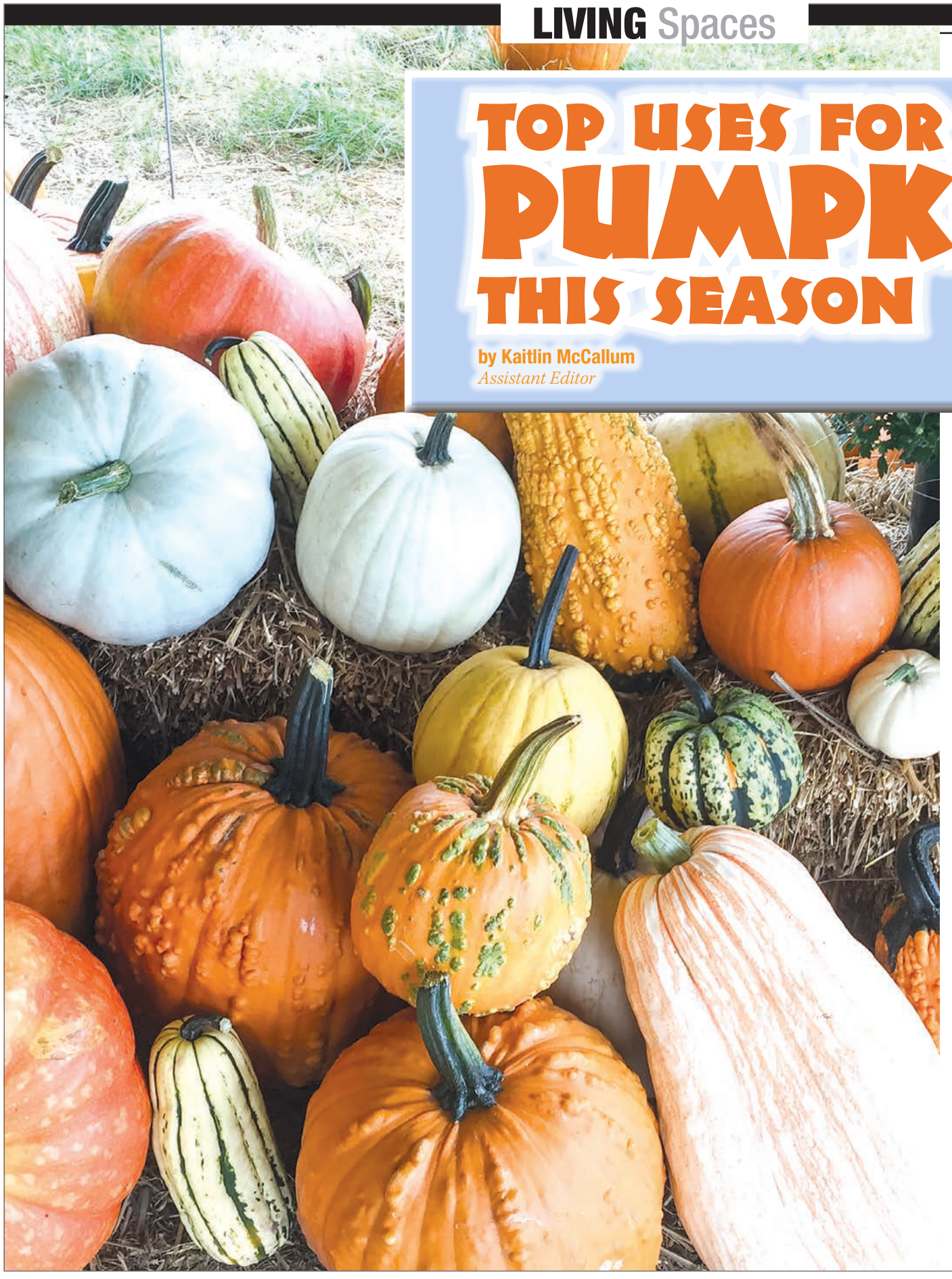


# TOP USES FOR PUMPKINS THIS SEASON

by Kaitlin McCallum
*Assistant Editor*

October in Connecticut means lovely crisp air, sweaters, apples and beautiful orange pumpkins on every doorstep. And while carving a traditional jagged-tooth grin and popping a candle inside is an acceptable Halloween option, there's so much more potential locked in the ubiquitous pumpkin. Here are eight of your best options.

## Decorate

Pumpkins are beautiful and, paired with mums, make an obvious fall decoration.

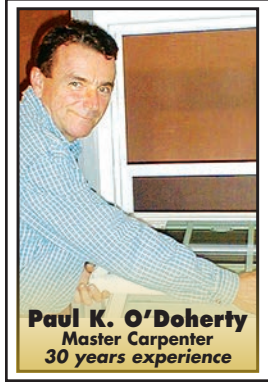
Lisa Gilbert of the Gilbert Farm in Rocky Hill says most people just place them on their doorstep as a welcoming celebration of fall.

Beyond that, they can also be paired with hay bales and cornstalks, Gilbert said.

"Sometimes I've seen people use gourds and a mixture of pumpkins and they layer them to get a piled effect for a fall display," she said.

Gilbert said many customers line the front steps of their homes with different sizes and colors of pumpkins, taking advantage of the many varieties now offered.

"Something new that's been all the rage in Pennsylvania and New England

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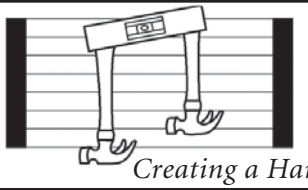
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is a stackable pumpkin. You take three different sizes or colored pumpkins and stack them on top of each other. You use a flatter pumpkin for the bottom and the top one is a rounder one," Gilbert said. "That's something new that's been trending the past few years or so, but has not yet caught on around here."

And for those houses that have crown molding around the door, tiny sugar pumpkins make a cute decoration, Gilbert said.

## Use as a serving vessel

Decorating with pumpkins can extend to your dinner table. Kathi Martin, owner of Brown's Harvest in Windsor, recommends using them as a serving vessel.

"We will hollow out a bigger pumpkin and use it as a vessel to serve chili or pumpkin soup or set in a liner and do apple cider," Martin said. "There's no harm in not putting in a liner, but any kind of jar or

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container that would fit inside would be fine."

You could also use smaller pumpkins as individual serving bowls for a dinner party.

## Make a face mask

Once you've hollowed out your pumpkins, you can add their insides to your beauty routine.

"On the beauty end of it, you can do a pumpkin peel mask," Martin said. "They're loaded with enzymes and Vitamins A, C and E." After mixing the pureed contents of one small pumpkin with a few teaspoons of honey and a few teaspoons of milk, apply gently, let sit 20 minutes, wash off and follow with a moisturizer.

## Roast the seeds

"It's a very healthy fruit for you," Martin said. "You can use the seeds. Toast them or roast them and between the seeds and the flesh,

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you're getting lots of different vitamins." To roast the seeds, toss with some oil of your choice, sprinkle with sea salt and roast in the oven in a single layer for 45 minutes at 300 degrees.

## Bake the fruit

Casseroles, pies, breads and soups are all delicious made with fresh pumpkin, but at Brown's Harvest, Mrs. Brown's pumpkin praline pie is the family's favorite recipe.

"My mom has a recipe for the best pie ever," Martin said. "If you are willing to do a few steps, it is the best. She'll make it a few times and we'll save her a few sugar pumpkins for her to make it at Christmastime."

Find the recipe at www.brownsharvest.com under the recipe's tab.

## Carve them

Carving jack-o-lanterns is a popular tradition, with many people opting for electric or battery-operated candles to reduce fire hazard. To keep them looking nice, Martin recommends waiting to carve pumpkins until a day or two before Halloween.

"Some people use vegetable oil or some kind of protectant to preserve it or soak it overnight in water if it starts to shrivel," Martin said. "You could also put in a tiny bit of bleach to keep the bugs away."

## Use as a planter to put flowers in

Gilbert said recently she has seen people hollowing out pumpkins to use as planters, too. Seasonal flowers, like mums, which are available at most local farms now, are a good choice to plant in pumpkins for a fall look. To plant, simply cut a large hole at the top, hollow out the insides and poke a few drainage holes in the bottom. Flowers can be planted directly into the pumpkin, filled, two-thirds full with dirt, or just slide a pot into the pumpkin. The pumpkin itself can eventually be planted into the ground, if desired.

## Feed the wildlife

When you're absolutely through with your pumpkins, carved or not, you can pass them on as a snack for wildlife. At Gilbert Farm, extra pumpkins are fed to the livestock, but backyard animals are just as happy to eat them.

"Deer love pumpkins. If there are any pumpkins left out in the field, the wildlife will definitely go in and eat them. It's a good source of protein, so if people get done decorating with them they can put them out in their yards. They could dispose of them in their compost pile and between what the wildlife does and Mother Nature does, they will definitely break down," Gilbert said.

"It's such a beautiful fruit that comes in so many different colors and sizes and people love decorating with them," Martin said. "It's just prolonging the colors of the season into fall. In terms of eating pumpkins, there are so many uses beside seeds and pureeing it for soup, pumpkin butter, pumpkin bread. The uses are endless, really." GL

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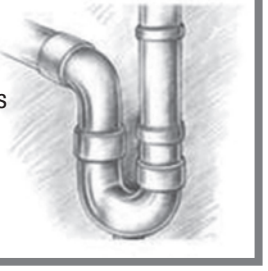

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# The final trim

## Tips to get your lawn ready for winter

**by Sloan Brewster**
*Staff Writer*

Water, water nowhere and not a drop for the grass to drink.

The dry summer is taking a toll on lawns, according to speakers who chimed in about getting the lawn ready for winter.

Estimates running around suggest that there has been between a six to eight inch rain deficit these past few months, said David Burr of DW Burr in Simsbury. That lack of hydration is leaving lawns brown and dormant or completely dead.

"There's a lot of things, problems this year because of the draught we're in. A lot of lawns have really taken a beating this summer," he said. "One thing we need to do is to have Mother Nature help us out a little bit with some rain."

Barring that, folks should water their lawns regularly if possible and consider irrigation systems, though he added that in some towns, including Simsbury, people rely on wells and may need to conserve water for other purposes.

Mark Pierson of Mark's Landscaping in West Hartford said much the same thing about the difficulty folks are having because their lawns are so dry.

"Honestly, water [the lawn], he said. "It's a good idea to get some water in there, in the root system for the fall."

Pierson and Burr both suggested aerating the soil before winter.

Aerating machines are available for rent at rental stores for about $65 per day, or $40 to $50 for a half day, Pierson said.

Aerating is the first step to take in the fall, Burr said. This year it's even more important than usual because aeration helps lawns become draught tolerant by deepening the root system.

"It's always a good idea to aerate," he said. "That opens up the soil, gets the seeds and moisture down deep."

Burr used lawns at golf courses or places where they are regularly watered to explain how aerating can help. Those lawns get used to the ready access to hydration, he said.

"The lawns get lazy because the roots don't have to drive down deep [to get water]," he said.

Aerating deepens the roots, putting them nearer underground water supplies so the lawn is less likely to get too dry during a draught.

The next step is seeding and fertilizing.

Fall is a good time to overseed or drop seeds on the already grown grass, Burr said. Even in periods of draught, a sprinkling of wetness tends to dot the grass in the morning.

"The advantage to doing this seeding in the fall is that you get a lot of these mornings where there's heavy dew," Burr said.

He recommends fertilizing with a slow acting fertilizer and seeding at the same time. Do that in early fall, he said. Water if possible, either the natural way with rain, or using the hose or sprinklers.

Then, around Thanksgiving, add another shot of fertilizer.

"Really, with this past summer, it's going to be about reseeding and getting some water," Burr said. **GL**

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